

Introduction

There is empirical evidence that infant feeding greatly influences the growth and development of an infant. Various infant feeding practices have been adopted by mothers and care takers of infants in order to achieve nutrition and proper growth of the infants. Many scholars have studied about the factors influencing infant feeding practices amongst both working class mothers as well as housewives. Although the hospitality industry is unique due to the work shifts and the workload, there is paucity of information regarding factors influencing the infant feeding practices among mothers working in the hospitality industry. This study therefore sought to establish the factors influencing the infant feeding practices of the mothers working in the hospitality industry.

Objectives:

The study objectives were: to establish the different infant feeding practices of mothers working in the hospitality industry, to establish the social–economic factors influencing infant feeding practices of mothers working in the hospitality industry and to find out the commonly adopted diseases by infants, as a result of infant feeding practices.

The methodology

It was a descriptive cross-sectional study employing both qualitative and quantitative study methods. A sample of 60 respondents was established through carrying out through a census. As for the key informants, these were purposively selected. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS 17.0 and micro soft excel. Statistical tests like the Fischer’s exact test and Spearman’s correlation were computed to establish the relationship between the variables.

Results

About (10%) of mothers exclusively breastfed their infants up to the recommended period although this is greatly lower than the recommended 90% by the WHO. Despite the mothers’ preference to exclusively breast feed their babies, the majority resorted to infant formula as a result of the work schedule. There was no statistically significant relationship between the socio economic factors and the infant feeding practices implying that the institutional factors mainly dictated the infant feeding practices of the mothers working in the hospitality industry. However, there was a knowledge gap especially regarding the initiation of complementary feeding that was noticed among the mothers. There was a statistically significant relationship between exclusive breast feeding and the frequency of acquiring diseases implying that exclusive breast feeding reduced the frequency of acquiring diseases

Conclusion

The study concludes that the infant feeding practices among the mothers working in the hospitality industry is inappropriate and the rights of both the nursing mothers and their children are highly

violated. If immediate action is not taken, the health of the infants will be at stake thus compromising the productivity of nursing mothers in this industry due to absenteeism as mothers take care of their sick children.

Recommendation

The study recommends that the management of the hotels should put up day care facilities and private feeding rooms whereby mothers go to work with their babies and feed them whenever necessary. There is also need to educate the mothers regarding the appropriate feeding practices of their infants.