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| Thesis Title | The Factors That Affect The Pattern of Infant Feeding in the South of Thailand. |
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Abstract

The major objective of this research is to study the factors that affect the pattern of infant feeding in the south of Thailand by comparing the feeding practices of Thai-Buddhist mothers and Thai-Muslim mothers. The variables studied were age, education, religion, occupation, household income per year, family size, number of children, order of child, whether the mother or someone else looks after the child and type of family.

The sample consisted of 200 mothers : 100 Thai-Buddhist mothers and 100 Thai-Muslim mothers with children aged between 3-6 months who receive medical services at Narathiwat, Sungai-golok and Ran-g hospitals in Narathiwat province.

The data were obtained by using a prepared interview schedule as well as the in-depth interview technique.

The interview schedule was divided into two parts. The first part dealt with demographic and socio-economic data and the second part covered the pattern of infant feeding which was classified into breast-feeding, bottle feeding and supplementary feeding.

The data were analyzed through the SPSS program using Percentage, Chi-square, Multivariate Analysis of Variance, Multiple Classification Analysis and One-Way Analysis of Variance.

The findings are as follows:

1. A comparison of the pattern of infant feeding of Thai-Buddhist mothers and Thai-Muslim mothers.

- 1.1 Most Thai-Buddhist mothers use breast feeding and bottle feeding together; breast feeding is carried out until the child is nearly 6 months old. They also give colostrum to the child for the first few days. Breast feeding is on demand. The breast is cleaned before feeding using cotton wool and warm water; bottle feeding is carried out for the first time when the child is 1 month old or more at fixed intervals and the bottle is prepared using freshly boiled water each time; supplementary food, usually banana, is given for the first time when the child is 2-3 months old.

On undertaking a statistical analysis of Thai Buddhist-mothers' pattern of infant feeding it was found that : no variable is significant regarding breast feeding, the variable significantly affecting supplementary feeding is education; the factors significantly affecting the overall pattern of infant feeding are education and whether the mother or someone else looks after the child.

1.2 Most Thai-Muslim mothers use breast feeding, usually until the child is more than twelve months old; they also give colostrum to the child for the first few days; they carry out breast feeding on demand, cleaning the breast with clean water each time before feeding; bottle feeding is at fixed intervals and usually begins when the child reaches 1 month or more and freshly boiled water is used each time to prepare the feed; supplementary feeding, usually banana, begins when the child reaches 3 months or more.

Statistical analysis reveals that the factors significantly affecting Thai-Muslim mothers' pattern of infant feeding are: for breast feeding the significant factor is whether the mother or someone else looks after the child; for supplementary feeding the significant factor is family size but for the overall pattern of infant feeding no factor is significant.

2. With regard to the pattern of infant feeding in the south of Thailand as a whole, the factors that significantly affect breast feeding are occupation and whether the mother or someone else looks after the child; the factors that significantly affect the supplementary feeding are education, religion, number of children, family size and order of child. Other factors that affect the pattern of infant feeding in the south of Thailand are number of children, family size and whether the mother or someone else looks after the child.

To summarize patterns of infant feeding of Thai-Buddhist mothers and Thai-Muslim mothers are not significantly different when holding the level of significance at 0.05.