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WAH WAH AUNG: FACTORS AFFECTING THE BREASTFEEDING PRACTICE AMONG MYANMAR MOTHERS AT NORTHERN DISTRICT OF YANGON. THESIS ADVISORS: PRAPAPEN SUWAN, Ph.D., VASON SILPASUWAN, Dr.P.H., CHANINAT VAROTHAI, Dr.P.H., SUREE CHANTHAMOLEE, Dr.P.H., NIPA MANUNAPICHU, M.A.. 129 p.

Breastfeeding is the natural and best foundation for infant health and nutrition in any setting. Adequate provision for breastfeeding is an investment in the health of present and future human resources. Today's babies are tomorrow's workers. It is well recognized that, breastfeeding is a major concern of all, it would not be thought of as mainly of health professionals. Actions are needed to encourage and support the practice. If not, more infants would be placed at risk of diarrhoeal disease, malnutrition and death. The main objective of this study was to identify the factors affecting the breastfeeding practice among lactating mothers (age 16-45 years) nursing infants with age 0-12 months. These 300 mothers attending health services at four health centers of Insein and Shwepyitha townships in Northern District of Yangon. The interview technique with structured questionnaire was used for data collection during June and July, 1999. Chi-square, Fisher's Exact test, Pearson's correlation coefficient test, Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) were performed for data analysis.

According to the result of study, it was found that most of the respondents belonged to 26-35 years of age group, almost all were living with their husbands except 9, most of them passed middle school (8<sup>th</sup> standard) level education, most were housewives and received above 5000 kyats monthly family income. About 47.3 percent had good knowledge and 83.0 percent had positive attitudes. There was significant positive correlation between maternal knowledge and attitudes. ( $p < 0.001$ ). Correlation between maternal knowledge and practice was not significant ( $p = 0.675$ ), also between maternal attitudes and practice was not significant ( $p = 0.172$ ). From the analysis of M.C.A, it was also found that (1) distance between residence and work site, (2) family support, (3) maternal education, (4) breastfeeding skills, (5) problems of lactation, (6) maternal attitudes, (7) maternal age, (8) rooming-in, and (9) maternal occupation, all accounted for breastfeeding practice with variance 0.119 or 12 percent.

In regard to breastfeeding practice, it was found that, 48 percent of respondents with 0-4 month old babies currently practiced breastfeeding whereas 21.8 percent with 6-9 month old babies practiced complementary feeding. A low percentage of respondents could practice breastfeeding correctly.

Regarding the relationship between sociodemographic features and breastfeeding practice, maternal education had significant association with breastfeeding practice ( $p = 0.017$ ). According to the result of this study, it is recommended that for working women who work far from home should be provided longer paid maternity leave, on-site child care facilities, breaks for feeding and expression of breast milk. Health education activities should be intensively provided for eligible women to increase knowledge about breastfeeding, to change some negative attitudes and to correct false beliefs. Topics about breastfeeding promotion should be integrated into curriculum of primary and middle school level, including the initiation of reproductive health education program in schools. Provision of support group is essential to overcome the problems of lactation and to raise breastfeeding skills. Further research using both qualitative and quantitative methods should be launched for better intervention program.