

**Maternal Practices in Care of their Infants  
at El-fayoum Governorate:  
An Assessment Study**

*Thesis*

Submitted for Partial Fulfillment of Master  
Degree in Pediatric Nursing

*By*

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## **SUMMARY**

Maternal rearing practices are a major determinant of morbidity and mortality status of infants. Infant morbidity and mortality is attributed to improper infant care practices which depend on the knowledge, attitude and practice of the caregivers (mothers) in addition to other factors like availability and accessibility of medical services (*Joseph, et al., ٢٠١٢*).

Pediatric nurse must thoroughly assess all aspects of infant growth and development including nutrition, immunizations, safety, sleep, hygiene, dental care and other common concerns. So, the nurse can explore the actual infant care practices in the community and the social pattern & customs influencing them. An appreciation of the hazards or conflicts of each developmental period enables the nurse to guide parents regarding childrearing practices aimed at improving the health status of infants and preventing the potential problems at the primary care level (*Wilson, ٢٠١٣a*).

The present study is descriptive aimed to assess maternal practices in care of their infants at El-Fayoum Governorate.

This study was conducted at five urban medical centers and fifteen rural maternal and child health centers at El-Fayoum Governorate. The study involved a purposive sample (١٥٨٠) of mothers representing El-Fayoum Governorate who had infants during the first year of life and attended in the previously mentioned setting over a period of nine months regardless their characteristics (age, educational level and socioeconomic standard).

Data were collected by using two tools; the first one was an interviewing questionnaire that was designed and written in a simple Arabic language by the researcher in the light of relevant literature to assess the maternal knowledge and reported practices in care of their infants which consisted of two parts; part ١ was concerned with characteristics of the study sample and part ٢ was concerned with mother's knowledge and reported practices regarding to infant's care. The second tool was checklists for the reported mothers' practices in infants' care related procedures (infant bath, umbilical cord stump care, diaper

area care, breastfeeding and artificial bottle feeding).

### **Validity and Reliability of tools:**

Validity was done by five experts in pediatric nursing field regarding content, consistency and clarity of data collection tools. Accordingly, some items in the tools were modified. The reliability coefficient for the study tools was calculated using the correlation coefficient Alpha (Cronbach) and ranged between the values (0.82 to 0.99) that are statistically accepted as is a very high coefficient.

### **Administrative design and Ethical considerations:**

A written official directed letter was obtained from the dean of nursing faculty at El-Fayoum University to get the directorate of health affairs at El-Fayoum Governorate permission to conduct the study after clear explanation about the study aim and its benefits. Verbal approvals were obtained from all mothers before inclusion in the study with assuring the anonymity, confidentiality and the right of withdrawing from the study at any time without giving any reason.

### **Pilot study:**

A pilot study was conducted for 10% (10<sup>^</sup>) of the study subjects to assess the constructed tools for its simplicity, applicability and time required to fulfill the tools. Omissions or additions of certain items were done. It took about one month from the beginning of December 2014 to the end of January 2015. Those who shared in the pilot were excluded later from the study sample.

### **Field work:**

The actual field work started from the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2015 up to the end of October 2015 for data collection. The data was collected by the researcher and a team of nurses in the previously mentioned settings after receiving training session in which the researcher explained the purpose of the study and how to use the previously mentioned tools to collect data, then the nurses attended three mothers' interviews with the researcher and finally, the nurses implemented three trial interviews under supervision of the researcher. The

researcher was available 3 days/week in each selected MCH care center by rotation till the required number of the sample was completed. The researcher started the work by introducing herself to the mothers and then informing them about the purpose of study. After that, the mothers were interviewed for 30-40 minutes in small groups of five mothers in each one with the rate of 2-3 groups per day.

***The results of the study can be summarized as the following:***

- In relation to the studied mothers' characteristics, it was found that 59.1% of them were in the age group of  $20 < 30$ , 54.2% resided in the urban areas, 91.1% were housewives, 96.8% were married, 47.6% were secondarily educated and 43.3% of them had family monthly income of  $< 1000$  LE.
- Regarding the studied infants' characteristics, it was found that 49.9% of them lied in the age group of  $6 \leq 12$  months, 50.9% were males, 31.1% ranked as the first infants in their families.
- Total maternal knowledge about their infants' care was unsatisfactory among 89.3% of the studied mothers.
- Maternal reported practices in infant bathing and oral & dental care were unsatisfactory among 53.5% and 93.4% of the studied mothers respectively while maternal practices in umbilical cord care and diaper care were satisfactory among 76.9% and 71.3% of the mothers respectively.
- Maternal reported practices in breastfeeding among 63.5% of the studied mothers were unsatisfactory while maternal practices in bottle feeding were satisfactory among 44% of the studied mothers.
- Maternal reported practices in complementary foods introducing among 78.4% of the interviewed mothers were unsatisfactory.
- Maternal reported practices in managing post-vaccination problems were satisfactory among 81% of the studied mothers.

- Maternal reported practices in promoting their infants' safety were unsatisfactory among 80.9% of the studied mothers.
- Maternal reported practices in infants' minor health problems management were satisfactory among 74.8% of the studied mothers.
- Total maternal reported practices in care of their infants were unsatisfactory among 82% of the studied mothers.
- There were statistical significant differences between both total level of mothers' knowledge and mothers' practices about their infants' care and maternal education, residency, infant's age and infant's rank.
- A strong positive linear relation was observed between total maternal reported practices and their knowledge regarding their infants' care.

***In the light of the present study findings, it can be concluded that:***

Most of the studied sample at El-Fayoum Governorate had unsatisfactory level of knowledge and practices regarding their infants' care in the areas of infant's growth & development, infant's bathing, oral hygiene, umbilical cord stump care, diaper care, infant's feeding, immunizations, safety promotion & common infant's health problems management. Also, the total level of maternal practices was more unsatisfactory among mothers at the age group  $40 \leq 49$  years old, illiterate, housewives & rural resided mothers, mothers having female infants at the age group  $6 \leq 12$  months old and mothers whose infants ranked the fourth and the fifth in the family.

***From the previous findings, the following recommendations were suggested:***

- Increasing maternal knowledge and improving their practices regarding infants' care by developing comprehensive health educational programs based on their actual need assessment.
- Arranging continuous awareness-raising campaigns about infants' safety promotion in MCH care centers and home visits for teaching about the potential dangers that infants may face.

- Establishing postnatal home visits programs to provide a wide area for mothers to discuss their concerns regarding their infants' care with nurses who can explain all aspects of infant's care leading to widely dissemination of proper infants' care knowledge and practices in the community.
- The findings obtained in the current study should be disseminated among the pediatric nurses for optimizing maternal infants' care practices.
- Further researches should be conducted to investigate the determinants of proper infants' care practices and acting on developing of those factors to improve the bad infants' care practices in the community.
- Further researches should assess the household traditional infant's care practices to develop culturally sensitive programs that facilitate the change in infant's care practices.