

## Child Feeding Practices Among Mothers in Urban Areas of Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria

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**Abstract :** Inadequate dietary intake has increased the susceptibility of under five children to malnutrition and infections. This study, therefore, assessed the feeding practices of children of 0-23 months of age among mothers in urban areas of Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was used to select four hundred (400) mothers out of 710 mothers from 7 primary health care centres in Akure metropolis for the study. Data were collected using modified WHO 2003 Questionnaire on child feeding practices. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while chi-square was used to determine the association between variables. Results showed that 52.0% of the children were males, with 47.5% in the 6-8 months age group. More than half (57.0%) of the mothers were between the ages of 20-29 years, and 45.0% had secondary education. Majority (94.3%) of the mothers breastfed their children in the last 24 hours preceding the survey. The feeding practices history of mothers showed that 28.0% and 53.7% of the mothers initiated breastfeeding less than 30 minutes and between 30 minutes to 1 hour after delivery, respectively. Also, 52.0% of mothers practiced exclusive breastfeeding for six months, while 26.2% breastfed from 6 months up to 2 years of age. Dietary diversity of the children age 6-23 months revealed that 68.7% of the children attained the minimum dietary diversity by consuming 4 or more food groups in the last 24 hours. There was a significant association ( $P < 0.05$ ) between mothers' education ( $n=180$ ), occupation( $n=41$ ) and dietary diversity ( $n= 150$ ) and meal frequency ( $n=209$ ). Therefore, the study concluded that the duration of breastfeeding and time of introduction of complementary food did not meet WHO recommended guidelines. There is urgent need to launching more programmes.

**Keywords :** breastfeeding, mothers, child feeding, urban areas, ondo state, nigeria

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