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COURSE TITLE:

ASSIGNMENT

Using the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2018, discuss the Infant and Young Child Feeding in Nigeria.

ANSWER

Breastfeeding is sufficient and beneficial for infant nutrition in the first 6 months of life. Breastfeeding immediately after birth also helps the uterus contract, hence reducing the mother’s postpartum blood loss. Giving any other foods and water (in addition to breast milk) before the child is age 6 months is discouraged because it may inhibit breastfeeding and expose the infant to illness. Infants older than age 6 months need other food and drink while they continue to breastfeed until age 2 or older; breast milk remains an important source of energy, protein, and other nutrients such as vitamin A and iron. The food given should include a variety of options such as peeled, cooked, and mashed vegetables; grains; fruit; some oil; and also meat, eggs, chicken, and dairy products to provide adequate nourishment (Pan American Health Organization 2002).The 2018 NDHS collected data on infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices for all children born in the 2 years preceding the survey. Contrary to the recommendation that children under age 6 months be exclusively breastfed, only 29% of infants in this age group were found to be exclusively breastfed. However, this is an improvement from the 17% figure reported in 2013. In addition to breast milk, 39% of these young children consume plain water, 4% consume non-milk liquids, 4% consume other milk, and 22% consume complementary foods. Fifteen percent of infants under age 6 months are fed using a bottle with a nipple, a practice that is discouraged because of the risk of illness to the child. Seventy-two percent of children age 6-8 months receive timely complementary foods. The minimum acceptable diet indicator is used to assess the proportion of children age 6-23 months who meet minimum standards with respect to IYCF practices. Specifically, children age 6-23 months who have a minimum acceptable diet meet all three IYCF criteria below:

▪ Breastfeeding, or not breastfeeding and receiving two or more feedings of commercial infant formula; fresh, tinned, or powdered animal milk; or yogurt.

▪ Fed with foods from five or more of the following groups: (a) breast milk; (b) grains, roots, and tubers, including porridge and fortified baby food from grains; (c) legumes and nuts; (d) dairy products (milk, yogurt, cheese); (e) eggs; (f) meat, poultry, fish, and shellfish (and organ meats); (g) vitamin A-rich fruits and vegetables (and red palm oil); and (h) other fruits and vegetables.

▪ Fed the minimum recommended number of times per day, according to their age and breastfeeding status:

1. For breastfed children, minimum meal frequency is receiving solid, semisolid, or soft food at least twice a day (for infant’s age 6-8 months) or at least three times a day (for children age 9- 23 months).
2. For non-breastfed children age 6-23 months, minimum meal frequency is receiving solid, semisolid, or soft food or milk feeds at least four times a day. At least one of the feeds must be a solid, semisolid, or soft food.