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**Topic:** Community health and nutrition programs

**Title:** Effectiveness of Community Based intervention in Improving Infants and Young Child Feeding and Caring Practices in Remote villages in Palestine

**Presentation Type:** Oral

Introduction:

Infant feeding and caring practices are critically important for children's growth and development. Sub-optimal feeding and caring practices are known to be prevalent in many remote villages in Palestine.

The objectives of this study were to assess mothers' knowledge and practices regarding infant feeding and caring practices and to evaluate the effectiveness of community based intervention by trained community health workers in improving these practices.

Methods

An intervention study was carried out in more than 60 remote villages in Palestine. Mothers (n=1000) of infants born during the year 2014 were identified by Community Health Workers (CHWs).

The trained CHWs targeted the mothers with key, timely messages and support for positive infant feeding and caring practices during organized home-visits throughout 12 months. Baseline and end-line data were collected from the mothers through household interviews.

Results

Infant feeding and caring practices were significantly improved after the intervention; exclusive breastfeeding until 6 months increased from 27.1% to 51.6%, % of children receiving minimum acceptable diet increased from 15.6% to 66%, % of children receiving Vit A increased from 65.2% to 85.9%, % of children receiving iron syrup on regular basis increased from 57.5% to 85.9% and % of children receiving correct diarrhea management increased from 10 to 13.3%.

Conclusion

This approach has positively influenced infant feeding and caring practices in the targeted villages. Scale up plans for this intervention and integrating it with early childhood stimulation component and maternal mental health and psychosocial support, is envisioned.