Impact of Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) Practices on Growth in Young Children in Rural Cambodia

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: To evaluate the impact of IYCF education and practices on growth compared to an ecological control.

Methods: As part of a randomized controlled effectiveness trial of micronutrient Sprinkles and IYCF education, all mothers received IYCF education. Group and individual sessions were delivered by health staff and trained village health workers. Anthropometry and IYCF were recorded at baseline (age 6 mo), endline (age 12 mo), and at two follow up points (age 18 mo and 24 mo) and compared with same aged children in the same province from the 2005 Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey (CDHS).
**Results:** There was no treatment effect on growth so intervention and control groups were combined. At 6, 12 and 18 mo, 59%, 86% and 73% of children met minimum adequate WHO IYCF practices respectively in the study group compared to 33%, 62% and 47% for CDHS children. Stunting (HAZ <-2) prevalence at 6, 12, 18 and 24 mo was 11%, 19%, 32% and 38% in the study group compared to 11%, 37%, 62%, and 44% for CDHS children. Underweight (WAZ <-2) prevalence at 6, 12, 18 and 24 mo was 14%, 16%, 21% and 26% in the study group compared to 18%, 28%, 37% and 21% for CDHS children. Differences for stunting and underweight were significant (p<0.05) at 12 and 18 mo.

**Conclusions:** IYCF education to study mothers improved IYCF practices and slowed stunting and underweight significantly at 12 and 18 months of age compared to CDHS children. Strengthened IYCF education and practices improved growth in children in this low-income, rural population.