

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Influence of Electronic Media on Diaper Use

MUNIR AKHTAR SALEEMI, HUMAYUN IDREES, ATIYA MAHBOOB, FAREED-UD- DIN QURESHI, UMAR BALOCH, PERVEEN AKHTAR ZULFIQAR

^{1,2,6} Department of Social & Preventive Paediatrics, Fatima Jinnah Medical College & Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, ³Department of Dermatology, Federal Post Graduate Medical Institute and Sheikh Zayed Hospital, ⁴Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, ⁵ 4th year FCPS Paediatrics Resident, Lahore

Address for Correspondence: Prof. Dr. Munir Akhtar Saleemi, MBBS. DCH. M Med. FCPS(P.Health), 200 D DHA EME Sector. Lahore. Office: 04299200281, Email: saleemimunir@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Objective: To investigate the sources promoting use of disposable diapers, and document reasons and frequency of disposable diapers use.

Design: Descriptive study.

Place and Duration of study: The study was conducted in the Department of Social & Preventive Pediatrics, Fatima Jinnah Medical College, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital from January to May 2010.

Material & Methods: Four hundred and sixty mothers with babies under 24 months of age were enrolled in the OPD of the Dept. of Social and Preventive Pediatrics, FJMC/SGRH after getting informed consent. The information was collected using a predesigned, pretested, questionnaire.

Results: The group consisted of 254 males and 206 females. The average age of babies was 6 months. 412 (90%) mothers used disposable diapers (DD) at times for their babies. 144 (35%) mothers were motivated by television adds, 127 (31%) by family members, 108 (26%) inspired by other miscellaneous sources and only 33(8%) used on advice of gynecologists and pediatricians.

Conclusion: The media played a dominant role by projecting advertisements demonstrating benefits of disposable diapers and quoting it as recommended by doctors.

Key words: Disposable diapers (DD). Napkin, diaper/napkin rash.

INTRODUCTION

A diaper is a used for infants to keep them dry and comfortable. Light cotton cloth or muslin is used for diapers or baby napkins in our culture for centuries. The local practice of using cloth made nappies is influenced by tradition and weather. This practice of not using diapers for infants is also seen in the Chinese, though China has cooler temperatures even in summer and harsher in winter¹.

The disposable diaper was introduced as commercial product in the USA in 1961; since then it has become almost the sole form of diapers for infants in the western and developed countries. However in poorer countries mothers use home made diapers of soft cloth or towels¹.

With existing socioeconomic situation and increasing number of people living below poverty line and per capita income of Pakistan 1027\$ in 2010 and is at 133rd position in the world.

An average the unit price of one DD is Rupees 15 (Rs.10-20). The daily requirement of a baby enjoying normal health varies. The Use of DD has become a part of normal care in urbanites.

The problem of nappy rash has been attributed to lack of exposure to air and infrequent change of diapers. The four commonest causes of napkin area rash are: chemical irritation, napkin candidiasis), infantile seborrhoeic dermatitis (exact pathogenesis is unknown), and atopic eczema (supported by diagnosis of atopic background)^{2,3,4,5}.

The television has become part parcel of majority of our urban and rural population. The businessmen are using the power this medium by airing attractive advertisements. The present investigation is aimed at to study the impact of media on diaper use.

PATIENT AND METHODS

Three trained doctors interviewed the mothers and filled the questionnaire in the presence of the mother. This activity was supervised by a consultant. In addition to questions regarding the use of DD the children were also clinically examined and their anthropometric data was also collected. Educational level of the parents and their employment status was also noted.

Influence of Electronic Media on Diaper Use

RESULTS

Eighty mothers used disposable diapers (DD) one per night, 42 when going outside home and 45 used one per day, i.e., (40.5%), 96 mothers used DD 2 per 24 hours (23%), 81 used 3 dp per 24 hours (20%), 68 used 4 or more DD per 24 hours (16.5%). 48 mothers (10%) exclusively used traditional cloth diapers. 435 (95%) mothers were housewives. 48 (10.5%) children had malnutrition. 31(7%) of the fathers were out of job.

Influence of Electronic Media on Traditional Practice of Cloth Diaper Use

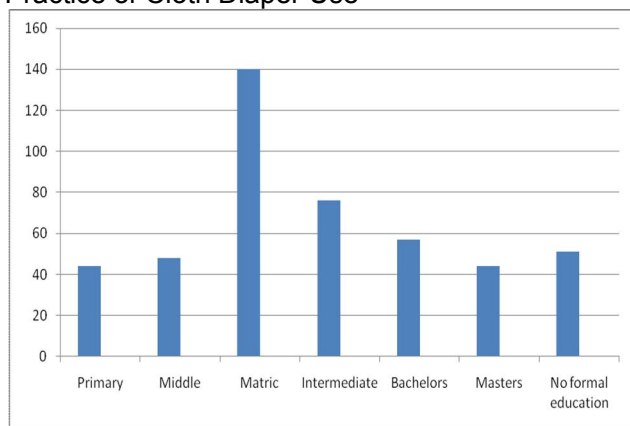


Table 1: Education of fathers.

Influence of Electronic Media on Traditional Practice of Cloth Diaper Use

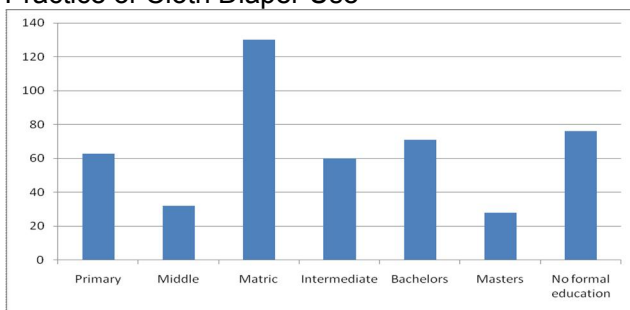


Table 2: Education of mothers.

There were 191 episodes of nappy rash in 171 children. 150 (36%) children who had DD had single episode of nappy rash against 7 (15%) children who never had dp⁶. 73 (38%) took treatment from the government sector, 45 (26%) from private doctor, 21 (12%) both from private and government, and 32 (24%) managed themselves. Only 10 mothers stopped use of DD

permanently after the nappy rash. 212 (51%) thought that use of DD was more convenient. 296 (64%) were exclusively breast fed at the time of the interview⁷.

Influence of Electronic Media on Traditional Practice of Cloth Diaper Use

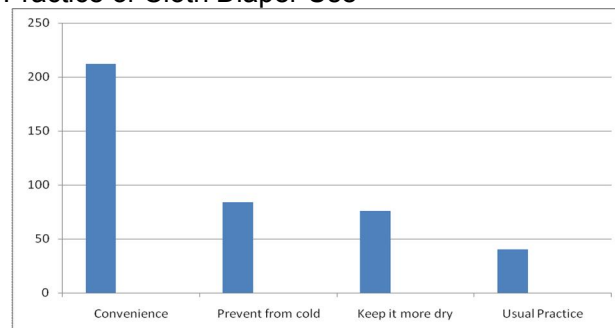


Table 3: Reasons given for use of disposable diapers by the mothers.

Influence of Electronic Media on Traditional Practice of Cloth Diaper Use

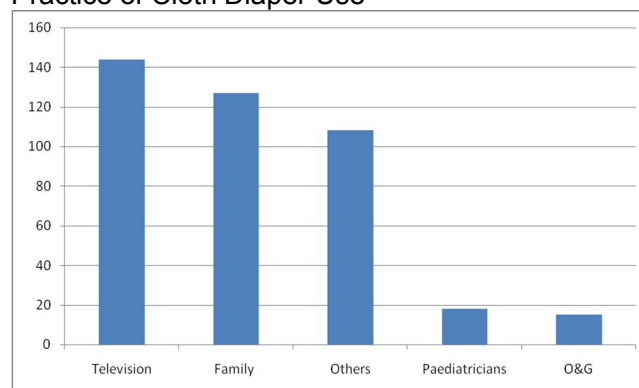


Table 4: Sources of motivation to mothers for the use of disposable diapers.

Career Counselor

DISCUSSION

Changing patterns of traditional practice of napkin use in our society influenced by changing societal preferences are to be rationalized according to our own resources and economic realities. Although there are benefits of world being converted into a global village but there disadvantages also; like common people being influenced by marketing and promotion of multinational companies particularly through electronic media (television), we don't realize that motivation force behind all these media campaigns is to earn unjustified profits from

countries like us, having populations larger than whole Europe. The results in our study shown that a large number of mothers were motivated by television to use DD. It was seen in the study that a large number of women with good formal education were house wives, perhaps reflecting scarcity of available employment opportunities and not necessarily due to domestic reasons. Its heartening to see that quite good percentage of women were exclusively breast feeding and health providers like paediatricians and obstetricians & gynecologists who are likely to have maximum of the contact with mothers and children are negligibly involved in promoting DD, but at the same time they are not putting enough effort to discourage the use of DD and to motivate mothers to use traditional cloth napkins as very small number of mothers stopped the use of DD after napkin rash. It would be premature to say that traditional cloth napkins are better than DD from our study although it appears that twice the percentage of children who had DD had nappy rash as compared to the children who did'nt. We suggest that some future studies should also look into this aspect⁸.

In a country where more than 5 million births are occurring each year, and with a per capita income of about 1000\$, single time use of DD would cost 5 crore rupees to the national expenditure. In this scenario it is our duty to see whether this change of practice of basic child care lead to further deterioration of economic state of the country⁹.

CONCLUSION

Electronic media is quite influential in promoting the healthy practices in community. In a country like Pakistan, the health care providers should promote cost effective health care practices. The

professional bodies should negotiate with Pakistan electronic media regulatory authority¹⁰ (PEMRA) to project ethical messages on mass media.

REFERENCES

1. Hachem JP, Crumrine D, Fluhr J et al. pH directly regulates epidermal permeability barrier homeostasis, and stratum corneum integrity/cohesion. *J Invest Dermatol* 2003; 121: 345-353
2. Atherton DJ. A review of pathophysiology, prevention and treatment of irritant diaper dermatitis. *Curr Med Res Opin* 2004; 20: 645-649
3. Buckingham KW, Berg RW. Etiologic factors in diaper dermatitis-the role of feces. *Pediatr Dermatol* 1986;3: 107-12
4. Campbell RL, Bartlett AV, Sarbargh FC et al. Effect of diaper types on diaper dermatitis associated with diarrhea and antibiotic use in children and day care centres. *Pediatr Dermatol* 1988;5:83-7.
5. Berg RW, Buckingham KW, Stewart RL. Etiologic factors in diaper dermatitis-the role of urine. *Pediatr Dermatol*. 1986;3: 02-6.
6. Van R, Wun CC, Marrow AL et al. The effect of diaper type and overclothing on fecal contamination in day care centers. *JAMA* 1991; 265: 1840-1844. Erratum in *JAMA* 1991; 265: 2810
7. Jordan WE, Lawson KD, Berg RW et al. Diaper dermatitis, frequency and severity among a general infant population. *Pediatr Dermatol* 1986;3:198-207.
8. Stein H. Incidence of diaper rash when using cloth and disposable diapers. *J Pediatr* 1982; 101:720-3.
9. UNICEF Report for Pakistan 2008.
10. www.pemra.gov.pk

ⁱ O&G (obstetricians & gynecologists)