Abstract

Background: The early introduction of food is consistent with a significant increase in the prevalence of overweight and obesity, particularly in children, partly because of the resulting changes in feeding patterns. The purpose of this study was to describe the complementary feeding practices of Mexican children younger than two years of age. Methods: Medline, Lilacs and manual methods were used to search for studies that assessed feeding practices in children younger than two years of age in Mexico. The following terms were used: complementary feeding, supplementary feeding, Mexico and weaning. Data on complementary feeding practices, including the age of initiation, the type of foods eaten, the frequency of food intake and the reasons for starting complementary feeding, were collected. The information gathered was subjected to qualitative analysis, and the data are presented as proportions in the tables. Results: The seven studies included in this evaluation revealed that children were introduced to complementary feeding before the age of 6 months. Although fruits were the foods most commonly provided when complementary feeding began, processed juices, soft drinks and fried snacks were also offered. The intake of these products increased as the children grew older and coincided with a low intake of foods containing high-biological value protein, particularly red meats. Conclusions: The results of the included studies showed that during complementary feeding, infants receive high-energy density foods, whereas the intake of foods that provide animal protein and iron in particular is low. In addition, common conditions associated with complementary feeding include overweight, obesity, malnutrition, and anemia, which may contribute to health problems.

Keywords

Complementary feeding, Weaning, Child obesity, Overweight, Malnutrition, Anemia.