

INFANT AND YOUNG CHILD FEEDING IN EMERGENCIES

GIFA/ENN PROJECT (2003-2004)

Researchers: Mary Corbett (Evaluation of Module 1) and Marie McGrath (Collation of case studies)

Part of the above report.

Case 8
Location: Liberia
Source: Corrine Machin, ACF Liberia
Time: 2002/2003
Issue: **Management of malnourished infants under six months**

We have found that not all infants under six months who present with malnutrition require supplementary suckling – some require breastfeeding support only.

In terms of reasons why infants present with malnutrition, poor feeding practices, e.g. early introduction of foods or non-exclusive breastfeeding, are significant contributing factors. In particular, rice water (water in which rice has been boiled) is sometimes given to young infants in addition to breastmilk., and infants are often suddenly weaned from breastfeeding onto family meals with no transition period. The use of infant formula and feeding bottles is not high in Liberia since formula is expensive and not widely available. Even so, their use likely contributes to 1-2 admissions per month to the TFC.

Supplementary suckling has been established for four years or so in the ACF programme in Liberia. It is here that Mary Corbett carried out her MSC thesis on the technique, hence there was considerable training at the outset. Management is according to the ACF protocol.

Case 9
Location: Liberia
Source: Corrine Machin, ACF Liberia
Time: 2002/2003
Issue: **Management of malnourished infants under six months in SFP**

On discharge of infants under six months from the TFC, the mother is enrolled into SFP for a three month period. For the first month, she attends weekly for a food ration for herself and the infant is monitored. For the second month, she attends fortnightly and receives a two week ration, and the infant is reviewed. In the third month, she presents once for review.

In reality we have found that once attendance progresses to fortnightly and into the third month, defaulter levels rise. Follow-up is made difficult since many of those who attend are internally displaced, addresses given are temporary and families typically move on and are hard to trace.