

ABSTRACT

This work evaluates the commonly used weaning diets in peri-urban Kumasi, Ghana, in terms of the type of diets, daily energy and nutrient intakes of the infants, frequency of feeding, and the chemical composition of the diets. Women with children of up to two years old in peri-urban communities of Kumasi municipality of Ghana, were interviewed in a cross-sectional survey. One hundred and seventy two mothers were randomly sampled and questioned on their socio-economic characteristics, types of weaning diets they give to their children, and the dietary intakes of their children. Composition of the commonly used weaning diets, and the daily energy and protein intakes of the children were determined. Liquid weaning diets were introduced at a mean age of 2.2 ± 2.4 months earlier than recommended, but solids were at appropriate time (5 - 7 months). The energy and protein intakes of the children were low, meeting only 49% and 90% of their respective recommended daily intakes. This is attributed to the low energy and protein densities of the commonly used liquid diet, koko, and low energy and nutrient contents of other weaning diets. It is recommended that an innovative nutrition education package that re-emphasizes the need to introduce weaning diets with continued frequent breast feeding to ensure adequate caloric and protein intakes should be designed and implemented.