

Abstract

Responsive infant and young child feeding as a reciprocal relationship between the child and his or her caregiver is recommended by the WHO but has received less attention than dietary diversity or meal frequency up to now. The current study assessed common (non) responsive child feeding practices and factors that facilitate or hinder caregivers to improve feeding practices in rural Teso South Sub-County, Western Kenya. The qualitative study used focus group discussion (n = 93) and Trials of Improved Practices (TIPs) (n = 48) to identify challenges and opportunities in household food distribution and feeding practices. Overall, the implementation of responsive feeding practices was feasible for the caregivers. Parents reported mainly positive experiences in terms of the child's feeding behavior and effects on child health. Traditional beliefs, practices, and cultural norms hindered some households to change intra household food distribution. Households who manage to implement responsive feeding even in food insecure regions should be consulted to (a) improve existing nutrition education messages that acknowledge these cultural norms, (b) to include more responsive feeding information in nutrition education material, and (c) to address gender norms to create awareness of the importance of responsive feeding practices and the need for adequate time allocation for infant and young child feeding.