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Milestones of Development in Infancy: A Prospective Study in a Tertiary Level Hospital of Bangladesh

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The timing of milestone is influenced by many factors. Sex and socioeconomic status has significant effect to some psychomotor milestones. The study was conducted to determine the pattern of milestones of development of infants in our country and to compare it in different sex and socioeconomic condition. It was a hospital based prospective study done in Sir Sallimullah Medical College and Mitford Hospital, Dhaka, Bangladesh from October 2014 to November 2015. Healthy term newborn infants with average birth weight were included in this study and milestones of this birth cohort were assessed monthly from birth to 12 months of age by using a set of 60 milestones. Total number of 217 babies was enrolled but during follow up 0.9% developed meningitis, 43.7% was lost to follow up and 55.2% of the cohort was followed up to 12 months of age. Among 120 babies 51.7% were male, 48.3% were female babies and 51.7% belong to lower, 32.5% middle and 15.8% upper socioeconomic group. There was no significant difference between male and female infants achieving most of the milestones of development except in language development in which female infants were little bit higher than male infants.

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Key words: Milestones of development, Infancy

Introduction

Psychomotor development in infants and children is usually assessed in terms of "milestones". A milestone is a maturity landmark and its timing in a child can be interpreted in relation to a reference population. The timing of such a milestone is influenced by many factors, which may be genetic or environmental in origin¹. The influence of the environment on a child's development has been stressed by psychoanalytic thought over the past 40 years. More recently, studies in animals and man have emphasized the importance of inborn differences in prejudicing the infant's reaction to his environment². These influential factors have been extensively investigated in developed countries. For example, a difference has been in the age at which the children start walking in five European nations of different ethnic origin. Another study in the U.S. showed that black children attained some milestones earlier than white children³. Developmental surveillance is monitoring a child's development over time to promote healthy development and identify children who may have developmental problems. Anticipatory guidance helps parents anticipate the next developmental stage and manage developmentally appropriate behaviours. Office surveillance of child development is essential for early identification and treatment of

developmental disorders; however, adequate training for this important triage task is lacking, especially in the cognitive and social-emotional sectors. Developmental milestones are specific skill attainments occurring in a predictable sequence over time, reflecting the interaction of the child's developing neurological system with the environment⁴.

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