



ANEMIA IN ADOLESCENT GIRLS

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ABSTRACT

To understand about the prevalence of anemia among adolescent girls and to study the socio-demographic factors associated with anemia. Anemia among adolescent girls is problem not restricted to any geographical region, but a problem faced across the world. In India, it is estimated that about 56% of the Adolescent girls are prone to Anemia. The initiatives & measures being taken by the government of India to address the issue of anemia among the adolescent girls and the effectiveness of the same are discussed.

Keywords: World Health Organization, Global concern, Vulnerable.

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence, as defined by World Health Organization, is usually the period of life between 11 & 19 years during which most of the girls reach their puberty [1]. This is the period, where rapid growth and visible changes are witnessed in terms of physical, mental, intellectual, emotional, psychological, and behavioral patterns. And during such rapid changes in physical growth they are also prone to Anemia. Anemia caused by lack of Iron or Iron Deficiency is a problem of both national & global concern [2]. Adolescent group can be targeted to address the issue of nutritional correction to reduce the long term impacts of Anemia. Adolescent girls

are the most neglected & vulnerable in terms of nutrition, health education, and overall growth and development is concerned.

PREVALENCE OF ANEMIA

In India, it is estimated that about 56% of the Adolescent girls are prone to Anemia, which means at any given point of time about 6.40 Crore adolescent girls are suffering from Anemia [3]. Study conducted in different states of India has revealed the prevalence of anemia as following [4].

Table 1. Prevalence of anemia

State/ Union Territory	% of Adolescent Girls suffering from Anemia
Madhya Pradesh	52.50%
Gujarat	37%
Uttar Pradesh	56.30%
Andhra Pradesh	77.73%
Tamil Nadu	58.40%
Maharashtra	85.40%
Himachal Pradesh	21.50%
Karnataka	41.50%



Category of population at the risk of contracting Anemia

Underweight and malnourished adolescent Adolescents with chronic illness

Dietary habits that do not have sufficient sources of iron required and demanded by the growing physiques of the adolescents – The requirement is 1.37 mg to 1.88 mg for adolescent boys and 1.40 mg to 3.27 mg for adolescent girls. Heavy menstrual blood loss (>80ml)

Obese & overweight adolescents

Poor sanitization, lack of hand hygiene, worm infestation in India is also one of the major causes of anemia in India.

Adolescent Pregnancy – owing to cultural beliefs of early marriages & early conception.

The above data are further confirmed in the regional studies done in Maharashtra by Sanjeev M Chaudhary, Vasant R Dhage [5]; Rajaratnam J, Abel R, Asokan JS, and Jonathan P. in the Indian State of Tamil Nadu [6]; GS Toteja, P Singh, BS Dhillion, BN Saxena, FU Ahmed, and RP Singh – A study done in 16 Districts across India [7]; Bulliyy G, Mallick G, GS Seth, and SK Kar - Hemoglobin status of Non-school going girls in Odisha, India [8, 9].

The adverse effects of Anemia among adolescents

An adolescent age is when the overall growth takes place whereby, a unique identity is being formed for the individual which shall shape the rest of the life of the Individual. Anemia at this stage of life shall have some serious long term issues like:

Stunted growth

Poor performance at academics, and co-curricular activities. Poor memory retention, reduced attention span, and increased school drop out. Reduced immunity, stamina for sports and other physical activities. Complications in mensuration, pregnancy and motherhood. All this would, directly and indirectly impact the growth of the nation as well as the economy.

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Fighting Anemia

Fighting anemia requires the willingness & interest of both the general population and the administration to accept the existence and prevalence of such an issue among the society. Strategically focusing on adolescents and taking measures by giving in additional supplements of Iron intake to counter the iron deficiency related Anemia can be one major problem solver.

Such strategic focus can be implemented by introducing health education programmes at school level and creating an awareness among the adolescents – both boys and girls.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The overall prevalence of anemia among adolescent girls in Karnataka as per the table above is 41.5%. The statistical association is found with iron deficiency, weight loss and presence of pallor. Emphasizes is required to adopt corrective measures of anemia and iron deficiencies in girls before they enter into adolescent age group, so as to defeat the long term impacts at early stages of anemia. There is need for regular supply of iron and folic acid tablets at AWCs and to increase the compliance regarding consuming tablets among adolescent girls. Improve nutritional status of adolescent girls through counseling and health education.

STATEMENT OF HUMAN AND ANIMAL RIGHTS

All procedures performed in human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any of the authors.

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Nil

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No interest.

