

Causes and Implications of Iron Deficiency Anaemia in Pregnancy: A Case Study of the Residential Sectors of Colombo District, Sri Lanka

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Anaemia is a global public health problem that affects the social and economic development of a country. 30% of the world's population is anaemic and 50% of it is due to iron deficiency. Anaemia in pregnancy has become a fatal condition in Sri Lanka, leading to maternal as well as neonatal morbidities, mortality, still births, low birth weight babies, premature deliveries and postnatal depression. According to the WHO estimates, the prevalence of anaemia during pregnancy in Sri Lanka is 29.3%. The objective of this research is to provide an in-depth analysis of the factors that lead to persistence of iron deficiency anaemia in pregnancy. The study is largely qualitative. A case study with an in-depth analysis of fifteen anaemic mothers at the end of their first trimester has been presented. The study was conducted in the month of August 2014.

According to the findings of the research; Socio economic factors, poverty, lack of education, side effects caused by the iron supplement, reduced intake of food due to morning sickness, superstitions, cultural influences, language barriers, family influences, ignorance and disinterest on contraceptives show a significant impact on iron deficiency anaemia in pregnancy. The prevalence of iron deficiency varies greatly according to host factors such as age, number of born children, education, environment, family size and wealth quintile. The prevalence of anaemia is high amongst the study units of the low wealth quintile and those with a below average educational level. Mild anaemia is more amongst the study units belonging to urban and rural segments. 60% of the total study units suffered from mild anaemia. Moderate anaemia was highest in the rural segment and severe anaemia was highest in the estate sector. The research conclusion depicts that the iron deficiency anaemia amongst the pregnant mothers in the Colombo district is mainly due to socio economic reasons. The burden of iron deficiency could be eliminated by iron fortification programs, media awareness, and state intervention on improving the life style, support from the health sector, improving the education, inter-sectoral collaboration and employing Tamil speaking PHMs.

Keywords: *Anaemia; IronDeficiency; Mortality; Pregnancy; SocioEconomy.*