

Knowledge and Utilization of Iron and Folic Acid Tablets Supplementation by the Adolescent Girls in Ahmedabad District

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Background

Nutritional anemia in adolescence influences women's entire life cycle. It increases complications such as low birth weight of infants and raised maternal and infant mortalities. India has about 113 million adolescent girls and the prevalence of anemia is estimated to be about 56% in them. Due to the magnitude of problem, the government along with UNICEF has been implementing Adolescent Girls Anemia Control Program for over a decade. Various studies showed that supplementing them with iron and folic acid tablets weekly is the most effective and cheapest alternative to prevent anemia.

Aims & Objectives

To evaluate number of adolescent girls consuming Iron and Folic acid tablets and to assess their knowledge about the same.

Material & Methods

The data was collected regarding IFA (Iron and folic

acid) tablets consumption, their source and adherence to the weekly regimen from all the adolescent girls included in the MICS (Multi Indicator Cluster Survey) of Ahmedabad district. The data from 30 clusters consisted of total 1060 households with the population of 6076 including 431 adolescent girls.

Results

The study showed that 51.5% (222) girls went to school and only 36.2% (156) received IFA tablets. Out of them 66% (103) stopped taking these tablets with 32% (33) non compliance caused by the side effects of the tablets. 47.4% (74) girls were unaware of the effects of these tablets on their health.

Conclusions

Though the idea behind the program is efficient, only limited number of targeted population is utilizing this facility. Proper education and motivation needs to be provided to the tablet providers as well as to the adolescent girls regarding nutritional anemia.