

Abstract

Introduction: Iron Deficiency Anemia (IDA) is the most important and common nutritional disorder in the world and the most common complication of pregnancy. *Pregnant women are particularly susceptible to iron deficiency anemia partly because of the physiological changes that occur during pregnancy.*

Objectives: *Determine the knowledge, perception and practices of pregnant women in Antigua as it relates to IDA in pregnancy; and to determine the prevalence of IDA among pregnant women who attended both private and public clinics between 25th January to 4th February, 2010.*

Methods: A specially designed questionnaire was prepared which contained 23 questions with single or multiple responses. There were four (4) sections: demographics, reasons for taking supplements, knowledge and perception related to IDA in pregnancy and practices related to IDA prevention. The data collection was performed by face-to-face interview and analyzed in the Statistical Package for Social (SPSS) for Windows 12.0.

Results: In the third trimester 2.8% had Hb. Level of <7mg/dl and 33% had levels between 8 – 10.9 mg/dl. There was a significantly high relationship between education and knowledge regarding effects of IDA on pregnancy and reduce capacity to work (**p – value: .004**); signs of anemia, paleness around the gum and nails (**p – value .017**) and bleeding as a cause of anemia (**p – value .004**).

Conclusion: The study revealed low levels of education and knowledge among the respondents; and there was a medium level of anemia. Therefore, measures must be taken to address these issues.

Key Words: Hemoglobin, Pregnancy, Iron Deficiency Anemia.