

ABSTRACT

Factors Contributing To Anaemia In Pregnancy In The Parish Of Westmoreland, Jamaica.

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The prevalence of anaemia in pregnancy is 24% in the parish of Westmoreland. By using the World Health criteria for measuring anaemia in the community, it can be said that the problem is at a level of moderate severity in the parish. An analytic study was conducted to identify factors that are associated with this phenomenon.

The sample consisted of 142 women who had initiated antenatal care at health centres in 1998. Anaemics(n=71) were women identified with haemoglobin levels $<10\text{g/dl}$. Non-anaemics (n=71) were women identified with haemoglobin levels $\geq 10\text{g/dl}$.

Results: 26.8% of the study population were in the <20 years and 25 - 29 age groups. Sixty two point six percent were either in a visiting or common-law relationship while 62.7% were unemployed.

Anaemic multigravidae were significantly more likely than non-anaemics to

have given birth within 2 years of their last delivery.

A history of anaemia in previous pregnancies was significantly correlated with being presently anaemic, OR 4.56, 95% CI.

Pica (eating of stones) was significantly correlated with anaemia Odds Ratio 10.07, 95% CI. On repeat Hb in third trimester cases who experienced a fall in Hb levels were women who reported high pica levels, consuming more than three items.

While most respondents gave correct answers to knowledge and practice questions as it related to nutrition education, there is a gap between nutrition knowledge and actual practice.

The problem of anaemia in pregnancy is multifaceted. Soci-economics, child spacing of less than 2 years, a previous history of anaemia, pica and a gap between knowledge and actual practice, were the main factors found to be associated with anaemia in this study.

An intersectoral approach among the various ministries, private sector and community organizations needs to be forged to solve this problem that impacts on the health and well being of mothers and their offsprings.