

KNOWLEDGE, PERCEPTION AND PRACTICE RELATING TO IRON DEFICIENCY ANEMIA AMONG PREGNANT WOMEN IN ANTIGUA

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Background: 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.

Design: 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.