Prevalence and risk factors of anaemia among pregnant women consulted to the reproductive health care unit of H.Dh. Regional Hospital, Maldives

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Background

Anaemia is one of the common nutritional disorders during pregnancy and a major cause of maternal death. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that over 30% of the world's population are anaemic. The prevalence in developed countries is 14% and in developing countries is 51%. It is considered as a major cause of maternal death globally, contributing 20 to 40% of maternal death. In the Maldives, the prevalence of anaemia among pregnant women is 48.5% in 2016. This study aims to determine the prevalence and risk factors of anaemia in pregnant women of a community in northern islands of the Maldives. There is an ongoing change in the lifestyle due to the development in the country. However, each one of these communities has some differences in their socioeconomic level, food habits and lifestyle. Thus, factors associated with anaemia during pregnancy may be different from the general population and may vary from the identified statistics for the country. By determining the prevalence rate and associated factors for the community studied would enable health care services to redesign the prevention programs focusing on this community.

Methodology

This is a quantitative, cross-sectional survey conducted among 53 pregnant women selected by a simple random sampling method. Data was collected through structured questionnaire forms. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 25.0. The P-value <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Results/Findings & Implications

Haemoglobin classification showed 60.40% normal and 39.60% anaemic. 33.96% of participants were known thalassaemia carriers. Amongst them, 61.11% were found to be anaemic with P Value < 0.026. Other factors studied showed no statistically significant association with anaemia.

According to the above results from the community studied,the authors recommended the following:

1. Strengthen and maintainestablished ANC services in atolls by providing health education and adequate information about pregnancy.

2. Ensure sustainability of iron supplementation during pregnancy.

3. Establish preconception care (PCC) in island communities.

4. Strengthen thalassaemia screening programs and provide information on pregnancy care in thalassaemia carriers.

5. Provide training opportunities to health care professionals to deliver effective ANC.

6. Explore limitations that may affect the capacity of health care in rural communities to achieve high-quality ANC and establish better transport services in between islands.

7. Conduct further researches to determine the association of nutrition and prevalence of maternal anaemia in the Maldives.

Conclusion

The prevalence of anaemia in pregnant women is 39.60% in this community. Thalassaemia carrier encountered in the population was found to be the main factor associated with the prevalence of maternal anaemia.

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