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Anaemia and associated socio-demographic factors among workers of a sugar factory in South India

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ABSTRACT

Background: Anaemia is the most under-recognized cause of bewildering morbidity interfering with the overall capacity and productivity of individuals, especially, in case of the workers of various factories and industries. It is worthwhile to understand and gauge the magnitude of this problem and various factors including those of nutritional, influencing the anaemia status among the workers. **Objectives:** To determine the prevalence of anaemia and study the associations between anaemia and the various socio-demographic factors among the workers of a sugar factory. **Methodology:** A cross-sectional study was done among all the workers of a sugar factory in Tamil Nadu. Altogether, 281 sugar factory workers were studied after taking informed consent. The data was collected using a questionnaire and venous blood was used for measurement of haemoglobin levels. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS version 16. **Results:** Among the 281 workers of the factory 260 were males while 21 were females. The prevalence of anaemia among males was 18.5% while among females it was 52.4% and a single lady had severe anaemia. Lower income, older age, duration of work experience and underweight were significantly associated with anaemia in males. **Conclusions:** Regular monitoring of anaemia status necessary as it can insidiously give rise to adverse impact on productivity by the workers and steps may be undertaken to rule out or rule in that the severe anaemia was not an “ice-berg” phenomenon. Simple but cost-effective preventive strategies need to be undertaken to elevate their nutritional status such as gooseberry juice and or cereal based fermented foods may be included in their menu along with the generic iron medication. Socio-economic status may also be addressed by implementing the government policies effectively. Some management techniques may be taught to workers to efficiently manage their limited resources.

Key Words: Anaemia, sugar factory, socio-demographic factors.