DETERMINANTS OF ANEMIA PREVALENCE AMONG FILIPINOS: NNS 2013

Imelda Angeles-Agdeppa, Ph.D., Ma. Rosel S. Custodio, and Marvin B. Toledo

BACKGROUND

Anemia prevalence rates in all population groups have been declining over the past 3 NNS periods from 30.6% in 1998 to 19.5% in 2008 and finally 11.1% in 2013. This figure however showed marked improvement over the 2003 (66.2%) and 2008 (55.7%) prevalence rates. Attributable factors in anemia prevalence need to be identified so that focus targeting will be installed for its further reduction.

OBJECTIVE

This study intends to determine the predictors of anemia among Filipinos across age groups.

METHODOLOGY

This is a secondary data derived from the 2013 National Nutrition Survey of the Philippines. The biochemical parameter analysis used is hemoglobin to determine anemia. Identification of determinant factors of anemia were done per age group: 6 mos - <1 yr; 1-5 yrs; 6 – 12 yrs; 13 – 19 yrs; 20 – 39 yrs; 40 – 59 yrs; 60 yrs old and above; Pregnant and Lactating women. The independent variables consisted of individual-based and household-based variables. Individual-based variables included demographic, anthropometric, clinical, and other group-related information. Household-based variables included socio-economic, dietary diversity, and food security variables.

RESULTS

Significant variable indicators showed that indigenous infants are more likely to be anemic than non-indigenous infants (OR: 3.42). Similarly, urban dwelling infants have less odds of having anemia compared to rural residing infants (OR:0.57). On the other hand, results for school age children through teenagers claim that experiencing food insecurity increases their chances of having anemia. In adults, Chronic Energy Deficiency increases the chances of having anemia whereas in elderly, increased physical activity reduces the risk of having anemia. Consumption of vitamin A rich foods has been proven to significantly reduce anemia risk among lactating mothers. Logistic Regression among pregnant women did not find significant associations among the available factors.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The continuous decline of anemia prevalence in the Philippines is associated with improved nutritional interventions such as in food fortification, food security, accessibility and affordability, health promotions and government programs that give financial assistance to low income families. Further interventions in terms of sanitation, food security and strengthening of food fortification programs are recommended since problems precipitating from them often lead to anemia and other health and nutritional deficiencies.