

Anemia in adolescent girls- prevalence and determinants

Lata R.Kollur

**Assistant Professor, Department of Community Medicine,
SDMCMS&H,Dharwad, Karnataka**

Introduction

The origin of the word Adolescence is from Greek Latin word, 'Adolescere' which means to grow or to grow to maturity.¹Adolescence is a process- a series of varied, rapid and extensive changes as well as period of life.²

Adolescence has been defined by World Health Organization as the period of life spanning the ages between 10 to 19 years.³ Adolescents represent 22.8 % of population of India.⁴

Adolescence is characterized by series of biochemical, anatomical and mental changes that are not found in members of other age groups .It is these rapid extensive changes that differentiate adolescents from children and from adults, that must be taken into account when adolescents and their health problems are being given attention.²

During this period more than 20 % of total growth in stature and upto 50% of adult bone mass are achieved. Adolescent Growth spurt results in 50% increase in calcium requirement and 15 %increase in iron requirement.⁴

In spite of all this, this group of adolescents is neglected, as traditionally this period is viewed as period of optimum health with low levels of morbidity and chronic illnesses.

Amongst adolescents, girls are doubly vulnerable, have lower priority, relatively neglected in family, should be given more attention as they are future mothers.

The adequacy of dietary intake is important for good nutritional status of adolescent girls ,as it has importance in terms of physical work .Also as they are future mothers inadequate dietary intake has important implications with regard to low birth weight, anemia and adverse reproductive outcomes.

NFHS-3⁵, has reported prevalence of anemia in the 15 to 19 year age group to be as follows, mild anemia (10-11.9)=39.1%, moderate anemia (7-9.9)=14.9%,severe anemia(<7)=1.7% and any anemia (<12)= 55.8%.

Adolescence is a significant period of human growth and maturation, unique changes occur during this period and many adult patterns are established. The proximity of adolescence to biological maturity and adulthood may provide final opportunity to implement certain activities designed to prevent adult health problems.⁴