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Factors related to anemia among under five years children in Monaragala District

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Objectives: To determine the factors related to anemia among children in Monaragala District.

Methods: Children, who are under five years of age with anemia, were recruited for this study. The study setting was pediatric clinic in District General Hospital Monaragala. Written informed consent was obtained from mothers of the children. Interviewer administered questionnaire was used to collect information related to socio-demographic factors, disease related factors, mother's knowledge and attitudes related to anemia in their children. Rating scale was used to measure mother's knowledge and attitudes related to anemia. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee, Uva Wellassa University, Sri Lanka.

Results: One hundred and fifty mothers who have children under five years old, diagnosed as anemia were studied during the period from January to April 2016. Out of them, the majority (83%) of children were from low income families. Seventy two percent of children had low birth weight while 38.1% of their mothers had less than two years' of birth space between two consecutive child births. Sixty one percent of mothers were maintaining non vegetarian food pattern for their children and 32.4% did not know about iron rich food sources. Moreover, 63% of mothers had poor knowledge regarding anemia. The study further highlighted that 21.4% of children had worm infection.

Conclusions: In Monaragala District, anemia among children is mainly related to poor economic state, poor quality diet, lack of mother's knowledge regarding anemia as well as balanced diet and as a result of other disease conditions such as worm infection.