LETTER TO EDITOR

Editorial on Iron supplementation and anaemia in India: necessary, but no longer sufficient

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Dear Sir,

With reference to the Editorial published in the Journal of EFI (Prasad M, Kapil U. Iron supplementation and anaemia in India: necessary, but no longer sufficient. Journal of the Epidemiology Foundation of India. 2025; 3(3): 229-230. DOI: https://doi.org/10.56450/JEFI.2025.v3i03.001), I would like to make following comments :-

The Editorial comprehensively brings out most of the measures for Anaemia control being implemented at present.

The Operational Guidelines under Anaemia Mukt Bharat (AMB) strategy launched by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), Govt. of India in April,2018 focus on SIX Interventions including Addressing Non-Nutritional causes of Anemia, with special focus on Malaria, Haemoglobinopathies and Fluorosis. While the above Editorial does mention about the first two Non- Nutritional causes, equal emphasis needs to be given to Prevention and Control of Fluorosis in endemic areas.

There are many Fluorosis Endemic habitations / villages in our country with high Fluoride concentrations in Drinking Water (> 1 mg / litre water). High levels of Fluoride in drinking water, food grown in such water and rock salt consumption lead to :- (a) Damage to Red Blood Cells leading to low Haemoglobin levels, (b) Reduced microbial growth in the gut and (c) damage to gastro intestinal mucosal cells and microvilli in the intestinal lining resulting in poor absorption of nutrients including Iron and Folic Acid. Any amount of supplementation of Iron and Folic Acid alone in Fluorosis affected patients would have no beneficial effect unless consumption of high levels of Fluoride in drinking water, the affected food items and rock salt are reduced simultaneously. This has been amply demonstrated by published research work (1), (2), (3), (4) on the subject by Prof A.K. Susheela (formerly at AIIMS, New Delhi). The silver lining is that upon withdrawal of High Fluoride from consumption, such changes are reversible within a few days.

Conclusion

Various Non-Nutritional causes of anaemia including control of high Fluoride levels in drinking water need to be addressed besides oral supplementation of Iron and Folic Acid, for any effective Anaemia Control in our country.

Declaration Of Generative AI And AI Assisted Technologies In The Writing Process

The author has not used any generative AI/AI assisted technologies in the writing process.

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