

# Effect of supplementation with an iron-fortified milk on incidence of diarrhea and respiratory infection in urban-resident infants

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To address the hypothesis that increased infectious morbidity is associated with iron supplementation, 783 randomly selected infants were provided with a powdered full fat cow's milk (non-fortified group). and 872 with a powdered acidified full fat cow's milk fortified with 15 mg of iron as ferrous sulfate (fortified group). All infants were followed from birth to 15 months of age with a monthly home visit by a nurse who recorded morbidity occurring during the previous 30 days. At 9 months of age, 15% of infants in each cohort were receiving breast milk only; data for these infants were segregated to make the third group. Episodes (mean  $\pm$  SD) of diarrhea/infant/year were  $1.06 \pm 1.29$ ,  $1.14 \pm 1.37$ , and  $0.82 \pm 1.04$  for the fortified, non-fortified and breast-fed groups, respectively; the fortified and non-fortified bottle-fed groups had a very similar incidence of respiratory illness;  $2.66 \pm 2.07$  and  $2.74 \pm 2.24$  episodes/infant/year, respectively. The incidence of respiratory illness for