

Iron nutritional status in pregnant adolescents at the beginning of gestation

Situación de la nutrición de hierro en la embarazada adolescente al inicio de la gestación.

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The frequency of anemia and iron nutrition deficiency was assessed in 342 low socioeconomic level pregnant teenagers at entry to prenatal care in 5 outpatient clinics from a South Orient area of Santiago Chile. According to the Center for Disease Control Criteria, 1.2% of women had iron deficiency anemia. Iron stores were insufficient (defined as a serum ferritin lower than 20 g/L) in 55% for women and depleted (serum ferritin lower than 10 g/L) in 21%. Women with more than 14 weeks of gestation had lower packed red cell volumes, hemoglobin, mean corpuscular volumes and ferritin levels than women with less than 14 of gestation. It is concluded that the prevalence of iron deficiency anemia is lower than that predicted for a highly vulnerable group but the high frequency of low iron stores should encourage the use of iron supplementation in these teenagers.