

Prevalence of vitamin B-12 deficiency in older adults Déficit de vitamina B-12 en adultos mayores: ¿un problema de salud pública en Chile?

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Background: There is a correlation between aging and the decrease of plasma levels of vitamin B-12. **Aim:** To determine the prevalence of vitamin B-12 and folate deficiency and its hematological impact among older adults (AM). **Material and Methods:** Cross-sectional study, in 1028 subjects aged 65 to 87 years, living in community and evaluated between 2005 and 2008. Percentile distribution of vitamin B-12, folate, hemoglobin, packed red cell volume and mean cell volume by gender and age were < 148 pmol/L, marginal analyzed. Deficiency was defined as vitamin B-12 levels deficiency as vitamin B-12 levels < 221 pmol/L, anemia was defined as an hemoglobin < 13 and 12 g/dL among men and women, respectively. **Results:** The prevalence of vitamin B-12 deficiency was 12% and the figure for marginal deficiency was 25.4%. Males were more affected than females ($p < 0.001$). The frequency of anemia was 8.6%, and was higher among women ($p = 0.004$). **Conclusions:** There is a high prevalence of full blown and