

Compliance with iron tablet Intake of women in child-bearing aged ; The influence of distribution channels : A study in East Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara

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Abstrak

This two month iron supplementation was a community trial study conducted in Sambelia village in Sambelia subdistrict, East Lombok district, West Nusa Tenggara province during October-December 1996. The main objective of the study was to investigate religious leader or toga as distribution channel of iron tablets for women in child-bearing age.

There were 187 women involved in this study, 94 received the tablets through religious leaders (Toga group) and 93 from cadre (Cadre group). Both groups of women received 8 tablets of 60 mg elemental iron (combined with 250 pg folic acid, 2500 IU vitamin A and 60 mg vitamin C) to be taken once weekly for two months. Coverage was defined as percentage of women in child-bearing age who received the tablets. The women's compliance was assessed by interview and stool test. Other methods of assessment included anthropometry measurements (weight, height, MUAC) and biochemical test (hemoglobin test with cyanmethemoglobin method). In addition, Focus Group Discussion on some women and personal interview with the distribution channels (toga and cadre) using Semi Structured Interview were also conducted.

The women were comparable in socioeconomic condition and hemoglobin status. The distribution through toga and cadre could cover respectively 87.1% and 86.2% of the women. Compliance was better among women in toga group who in average took 6.8 tablets compared to 5.9 among women in cadre group ($p < 0.10$). There was however no difference in improvement of hemoglobin (after controlling for some confounders) nor in decrease of anemia prevalence between the two groups after 2 months period. The Hb increased by 0.14 g/dL and 0.30 g/dL and anemia prevalence decreased by 13.9 % and 16.2 % respectively in toga group and cadre group. In the cadre group, predictors of non full compliers were social factors (ie. age, family income, education level) and frequency of contact with the cadre, whereas in the toga group, only side effects were predictive of non-full compliers. Combining both groups, 31% of non full compliers were identified by social factors (ie. age less than 20 and living in permanent house) and provider-user dynamics (ie frequency of contact with the distribution channels).

Results suggest that toga was a potential channel of iron tablet for women in child-bearing age. With different nature of toga and cadre, their cooperation has potential for better achievement of iron supplementation program.