Objective. To determine the prevalence of iron deficiency anemia (IDA) among Tarahumara women of reproductive age. Material and Methods. A cross-sectional survey was conducted in a representative sample of 481 women aged 12-49 years, residents of Guachochi Municipality, Chihuahua, from June to September 1998. The hemoglobin (Hb) level was measured in capillary blood using the Hemocue technique, and the serum ferritin level in capillary serum spotted on filter paper, in a sub-sample of women. Central tendency and dispersion measures were estimated; the Chi-squared test was used to test differences in proportions and ANOVA and Bonferroni test for differences in means. Results. Prevalence of anemia (mean Hb±S.D.) was 16.1% (140±16 g/l) and 25.7% (129±12 g/l) for non-pregnant and pregnant women, respectively. Pregnant women in the 3rd trimester and those who were breast-feeding their children during the first 6 months after delivery had the highest prevalence of anemia (38.5% and 42.9%, respectively). Iron deficiency was responsible for most of the anemia found in this sample. Conclusions. This study provides relevant information for the development of intervention programs to treat and prevent IDA in this ethnic group. The English version of this paper is available too at: http://www.insp.mx/salud/index.html

Keywords
Key words: anemia, iron deficiency; Tarahumara women; Mexico