Abstract

Introduction: Anemia is one of the most important nutritional deficiencies affecting various social and socioeconomic strata. It is more common in developing countries, with children and adolescents being at a significantly higher risk for the condition. Objective: To perform a literature review on iron deficiency anemia in adolescence as a public health issue and on the risk factors that may contribute towards nutritional deficiencies, stunted growth and development in this age group, emphasizing the physiopathology and causes of anemia, the different diagnostic approaches, and its clinical characteristics, prevention and treatment. Methodology: The LILACS-BIREME, SCIELO and PUBMED databases were consulted for the study. Scientific papers published in Spanish, Portuguese or English between 2000 and 2013 on the subject of iron deficiency anemia in adolescents were selected for inclusion. A total of 102 studies published between January 1st, 2000 and June 30th, 2013 were identified and evaluated. Forty-two articles meeting the inclusion criterion (adolescents with anemia) were selected for this review. Finally, an analysis was conducted and the papers were evaluated in accordance with the study objectives. Results and Discussion: The studies reviewed revealed a prevalence of iron deficiency anemia of around 20% in adolescents and described the harmful effects of anemia in this age group. Conclusion: Preventive action is required with respect to iron deficiency anemia. Healthcare professionals should be aware of the need for early diagnosis, prophylaxis and treatment.

Keywords

Iron deficiency anemia, Iron deficiency, Adolescent.