

Prevalence and Aetiology of Anaemia in The Elderly: A Cross-Sectional Study Among Attendees of an Elderly Care Unit at Teaching Hospital Peradeniya

**W. A. O. N. Wickramasinghe^{1*}, R. M. P. M. Rathnayake²,
H. B. V. S. Jayasinghe², M. W. C. J. Jayasinghe³**

¹Department of Haematology, Teaching Hospital Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

²Department of Pathology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

³Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

**omeewaits@yahoo.com*

Anaemia is common in elderly and presents as a major public health problem. According to world Health Organization (WHO) global prevalence of anaemia in elderly is 23.9%. In the west, the prevalence of anaemia in the elderly ranges from 12% in the community, to 47% in hospitalized patients, giving rise to a mean prevalence of 17%. Literature revealed that no studies have been done so far to assess the prevalence and the causes of anaemia among elderly in Sri Lanka. This study was conducted to assess the prevalence and causes of anaemia in persons above 65 years attending the elderly care unit, Teaching Hospital Peradeniya. A cross sectional analytical study was planned with an estimated sample size of 300. The study is ongoing and 230 samples have been collected so far. Initially, full blood count was done and anaemia was diagnosed based on WHO criteria of a hemoglobin concentration of <13 g/dL in males and <12 g/dL in females. Further investigations including blood picture, reticulocyte indices, iron studies, stool for occult blood, Haemoglobin, capillary electrophoresis and a food frequency recall were done to explore aetiological factors. Out of 230 persons, 95 (41.3%) were found to be anaemic. Chronic inflammation accounted for 44.2% of cases. Iron deficiency alone and a combination of chronic inflammation and iron deficiency contributed to 26.3% and 12.6% respectively. Only one out of 41 subjects, who were iron deficient, had evidence of gastrointestinal bleeding and an iron poor diet was observed among 60% of the iron deficient patients. Improving the diet and optimizing the management of the co-morbid diseases may reduce the prevalence of anaemia in the elderly.

Key words: Prevalence, Anaemia, Elderly, Sri Lanka, Aetiology