Title : Prolonged exclusive lactation and low educational level of mothers and potential risk factors for the occurrence of iron deficiency anemia in Algerian preschool children

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In Algeria, anemia is a major public health problem, where at liste 42.5% of children in preschool age have this abnormality, its etiology is attributed in most cases to iron deficiency and the prevalence iron deficiency anemia remains poorly known in many parts of the country. A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted in the commune of El Idrissia (agropastoral region of central Algeria), in order to assess the prevalence of iron deficiency anemia and to investigate the factors associated with it in a population of 368 clinically healthy children, between 6 months and 5 years old. The biological indicators of the martial status of the population were measured, indicators of malnutrition were calculated, thus, some socioeconomic data were collected. Our results show a prevalence of 20.92% (CI95%: 17-25%). children with iron deficiency anemia. Statistical analysis shows that the increased incidence of iron deficiency anemia is significantly related to factors such as: age less than 24 months, late weaning, exclusive breastfeeding and low level of education of mothers. In a second step, in order to implement a rapid tool for evaluating food intake at the disposal of the screening and monitoring units, we designed a food frequency questionnaire for this population. The validity of the questionnaire was tested by comparing it to the reference methods (24-hour recall for 3 days) and its reproducibility was evaluated by comparing it to a second food frequency questionnaire administered 1 month later.