

## **Prevalence of Anemia among Preschool Age Children**

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**Objective:** To evaluate the prevalence of anemia in general and microcytic hypochromic anemia among preschool-age children.

**Design:** A Retrospective Cohort Study.

**Setting:** Three government hospitals and two private hospitals, Abha and Khamis Mushait, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

**Method:** The study population included all children aged 6 months to 59 months seen in the emergency room (ER) and had a complete blood count. Hemoglobin level (Hb), mean corpuscular volume (MCV) and mean corpuscular hemoglobin (MCH) were estimated.

**Result:** The study included 2,415 children aged 6 to 59 months with a mean of 29.7 and a standard deviation of  $\pm 17.9$  months. More than half of them were males, 1,446 (59.9%), and the majority were Saudis, 1,921 (79.5%). The prevalence of anemia was 26.4%; mostly mild, 387 (16%), or moderate, 232 (9.6%). Severe anemia was found in 19 (0.8%) children. Microcytic hypochromic anemia was found in 679 (26.9%).

**Conclusion:** Anemia is still a public health problem among preschool children in Southwest Saudi Arabia, despite the improvement in socio-economic status. Further research is recommended to evaluate the underlying factors, particularly nutritional habits.