

**Prevalence of Anemia among Pregnant Women Registered
at Antennal Clinic of Ondo Specialist Hospital, Ondo state,
Nigeria**

ABSTRACT

Anemia remains a major risk factor for unfavorable outcome of pregnancy both for the mother and the fetus. It is the world's second leading cause of disability and one of the most serious global public health problems among children and pregnant women. Its diagnosis remains a challenge in poor and underfunded hospitals and primary health centers. This study is a hospital-based cross-sectional study conducted in Ondo Specialist Hospital, Ondo town to assess anemia among pregnant women attending antenatal care clinic from August to October 2015. One hundred and fifty pregnant women were enrolled in this study. Data were collected using pretested questionnaire, which contains socio-demographic characteristics of the pregnant women. Blood samples were collected to measure hemoglobin and Packed Cell Volume (PCV) levels. Data were entered and statistical analysis was performed using SPSS version 20.0 software. Association between variables was done using chi square, and statistical significance was considered at $p < 0.05$. The mean age of pregnant women was 28.92 ± 4.89 years and the prevalence of anemia obtained in this study using the Tallquist, Hemoglobin cyanide methods and PCV was 36%, 36.7% and 47.3% respectively, based on the World Health Organization criterion for the diagnosis of anemia in pregnancy (hemoglobin < 11.0 g/dl; PCV $< 33\%$). Our study revealed a high prevalence of anemia in pregnant women and calls for more health

24 intervention including health education about causes of anemia and its risk factors. Antenatal
25 care follow up should also be improved on.

26 **Keywords: Anemia, Pregnant women, Antenatal care, Prevalence, Hemoglobin**

27

28 **INTRODUCTION**

29 Anemia has been described as the most common complication related to pregnancy and it affects
30 almost half of pregnant women worldwide [1]. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines
31 anemia as low blood hemoglobin (Hb) concentration level in the body, which decreases oxygen-
32 carrying capacity of red blood cells to tissues [2, 3]. It is a global public health problem which
33 affects both developed and developing countries thus resulting into maternal morbidity and
34 mortality as well as other social and economic problems [3]. Globally, anemia affects about 1.62
35 billion people [4]. It was estimated that the prevalence of anemia in developed countries is about
36 9% while it's about 43% in developing countries [5]. Anemia in pregnancy may lead to
37 premature births [6], low birth weight [7], fetal impairment and infant deaths [8]. Every year,
38 anemia is estimated to be responsible for more than 115,000 maternal deaths and 591,000
39 prenatal deaths worldwide. An increased risk of psychiatric disorders has also been reported
40 among children and adolescents with iron deficiency anemia [9].

41 In West Africa, anemia is responsible for an estimated 20% of maternal deaths and still
42 contributes more to deaths through obstetric hemorrhage [10]. Epidemiological studies on
43 prevalence of anemia among pregnant women in Nigeria have been carried out and reported with
44 varying magnitude of anemia and several associated factors. Most of these studies based their
45 classification on WHO cut-off point of the hematocrit of 33%. Some reported prevalence as low
46 as 30% [11], 35.3% [12] and others as high as 85.5% [13] and 76.5% [14] among pregnant

47 women. The aim of this study was to assess the anemic status of pregnant women attending the
48 antenatal clinic of a specialist hospital using different methods of evaluation for Hemoglobin
49 (g/dl) and packed cell volume measurement.

50

51 **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

52 **Study Area**

53 The study location was Ondo town, the second largest city located in the central senatorial
54 district of Ondo State with a population of about 287,911 and located at latitude 7°56'00"N and
55 longitude 4°49'59"E with an altitude of 264m. The state has four specialist hospitals which
56 serve as referral centers to the general hospitals and primary health care centers. The study was
57 conducted in antenatal clinic of the State Specialist Hospital, Ondo, Nigeria.

58 **Study design and population.**

59 This was a cross-sectional and hospital-based study among 150 pregnant women attending the
60 antenatal clinic which were recruited consecutively for the study. Pregnant women who were ill
61 or admitted to the hospital were excluded for the study.

62 **Data and Sample Collection**

63 The age (years), education, occupation, religion and stage of pregnancy of every participant were
64 documented and about 5mls of blood sample was collected aseptically using a sterile needle and
65 syringe into EDTA bottle, and was stored at 4±2°C before analysis.

66 **Data and Sample Analysis**

67 Anemia was assessed by measuring the blood hemoglobin level with two different methods
68 (Tallquist method and hemoglobin cyanide method) and packed cell volume (PCV). The WHO
69 criterion for the diagnosis of anemia in pregnancy (hemoglobin <11.0 g/dl; PCV <33%) was

70 used. The validity of the two different methods used for hemoglobin measurement was also
71 checked. Data were analyzed using the SPSS software version 20.0.

72 **Ethical considerations**

73 The Ondo State Ethics Board and State Specialist Hospital gave ethical approval before the study
74 was commenced. An informed consent was also obtained from all participants after being given
75 information on the study before the questionnaires were administered.

76 **RESULT.**

77 Samples were collected from all recruited participants and assessed for anemia giving a 100%
78 response rate. Table 1 shows that the mean age of respondents was 28.92±4.89years with
79 majority of respondents (68.0%) in 25-34 years age group. More than half of the respondents had
80 tertiary education (65.3%), were Christians (54.7%), while 46% of respondents had
81 government/private occupation.

82 **Table 1: Demographic information of the pregnant women**

Demographic Information	f (n=150)	%
AGE		
15 - 24years	28	(18.7)
25 - 34years	102	(68.0)
35 - 44years	20	(13.3)
OCCUPATION		
Government/Private work	69	(46.0)
Business Woman/Trader	35	(23.3)
Artisan/hard skilled work	38	(25.4)
Farmers	0	(0.0)
Not working	8	(5.3)
RELIGION		
Christianity	82	(54.7)
Islamic	61	(40.7)
Traditional	7	(4.6)
Others	0	(0.0)
EDUCATION		
Primary education	12	(8.0)
Secondary education	39	(26.0)
Tertiary education	98	(65.3)

No formal education	1	(0.7)
TRIMESTER		
First	30	(20.0)
Second	74	(49.3)
Third	46	(30.7)
Mean age: 28.92±4.89years		

83 The anemic status of the pregnant women was diagnosed using different methods of evaluation
84 for Hemoglobin (g/dl) and packed cell volume measurement. Table 2 shows that 47.3% of the
85 pregnant women were anemic using the PCV result while 36.0% and 36.7% of the pregnant
86 women were anemic using their hemoglobin (g/dl) levels as determined through the Tallquist
87 and hemoglobin cyanide method respectively.

88 **Table 2: Anemic status of the pregnant women as assessed with different diagnostic**
89 **methods**

Anemic status	Hemoglobin (g/dl)		Packed cell volume (PCV) n (%)
	Tallquist method n (%)	Hemoglobin cyanide method n (%)	
Anemic (<11g/dl)	54 (36.0)	55 (36.7)	71 (47.3)
Non anemic (≥11g/dl)	96 (64.0)	95 (63.3)	79 (52.7)
Total	150 (100.0)	150 (100.0)	150 (100.0)
Mean±S.D	11.15 ± 1.47g/dl	11.20 ± 1.53g/dl	32.79±4.53%

90
91 About half of the pregnant women 74 (49.3%) were in their second trimester of pregnancy
92 (Table 1). Majority of the anemic pregnant women belong to age group 25 -24 years (Table 3)
93 and in their second trimester of the pregnancy (Table 4). There was a significant difference
94 between the mean hemoglobin levels using the two different methods at P < 0.001 (Table 5)

95 **Table 3: Age frequency distribution of anemic pregnant women**

Age frequency and percentage distribution	Hemoglobin (g/dl)		Packed cell volume n (%)
	Tallquist method n (%)	Hemoglobin cyanide method n (%)	

15 - 24years	8 (14.8)	9 (16.4)	15 (21.1)
25 - 34years	40 (74.1)	40 (72.7)	49 (69.0)
35 - 44years	6 (11.1)	6 (10.9)	7 (9.9)
Total	54 (100.0)	55 (100.0)	71 (100.0)

96

97 **Table 4: Stage of pregnancy of anemic pregnant women**

Pregnant women with Anemia	Trimester/Stage of Pregnancy			
	First Trimester	Second Trimester	Third Trimester	Total
PCV result	9 (12.8%)	41 (57.8%)	21 (29.6%)	71 (47.3%)
Tallquist Method	3 (5.6%)	25 (46.3%)	16 (29.6%)	54 (36.0%)
Hemoglobin cyanide Method	3 (5.5%)	28 (50.9%)	16 (29.1%)	55 (36.7%)

98

99 **Table 5: Comparison of mean of hemoglobin level by Tallquist and hemoglobin cyanide**
 100 **method**

Method of estimation of Hb	No of samples	Hemoglobin (g/dl) Mean \pm S.D	Significance
Tallquist Method	150	11.15 \pm 1.47	P < 0.001
Hemoglobin Cyanide Method	150	11.20 \pm 1.53	

101

102 DISCUSSION

103 The prevalence of anemia obtained in this study using the Tallquist, hemoglobin cyanide
 104 methods and PCV was 36%, 36.7% and 47.3% respectively, based on the World Health
 105 Organization criterion for the diagnosis of anemia in pregnancy (hemoglobin <11.0 g/dl; PCV
 106 <33%) [15]. The overall prevalence of anemia obtained in this study was higher than 27.9%
 107 reported among pregnant women in Southeast Ethiopia where the mean Hb value was 11.4 \pm 2.3
 108 g/dl [16], 19.7% (mean Hb value is 11.7 \pm 2.32 g/dl) among pregnant women in Mekelle town,
 109 Ethiopia [17], 21.6% in Gondar [18], 23.2% in Nigeria [19] and 27.1% in Turkey [20]. The

110 differences observed in these studies may be due to the different socioeconomic conditions,
111 culture, health-seeking behavior and availability of maternal health services.

112 The prevalence in our study is similar to 36.6% reported by Niguse and colleagues [21] in
113 Shalla Woreda and 33% reported by Jufar and Zewde [22] in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. However,
114 our findings are lower than 53.9% reported among pregnant women in Gilgel Gibe dam area in
115 Southwest Ethiopia [23], 62.6% in Eastern Sudan [24], 54.5% reported in Uyo, Nigeria [25],
116 64.1% in Enugu, Nigeria [26], 56.1% in Lagos, Nigeria [12] and 72% in north-eastern Nigeria
117 [27]. The varying difference in these studies could be as a result of prevalent malaria infection in
118 these study populations. *Plasmodium falciparum*, one of the *Plasmodium* species that causes
119 malaria have long been identified to contribute to anemia throughout life and specifically during
120 pregnancy in endemic countries [28].

121 The highest prevalence of anemia in our study was observed among those aged 25 – 34 years.
122 This is in contrast to the prevalence of anemia which was higher in pregnant women in the age
123 group of 18-26 years [16] but similar to the highest prevalence of anemia among women aged
124 25–29years [25].

125 In our study, the highest prevalence (57.8%, 46.3% and 50.9% using the PCV, Tallquist and Hb
126 cyanide methods respectively) was observed among those in their second trimester. This is
127 similar to what was reported in Uyo where anemia was prevalent (55.1%) among pregnant
128 women in their second trimester [25]. Many studies conducted reported highest prevalence of
129 anemia in the third trimester [16, 17, 23, 29]. The findings from our study call for a serious
130 attention to pregnant women's anemic status. If these women could be anemic in their second
131 trimester, it could pose a great threat to them and their unborn children. **Further studies need to**

132 be carried out to determine what are the causes/risk factors associated with women in this study
133 population being anemic in their second trimester.

134 The validity of the two methods used in measuring the hemoglobin level of respondents was
135 compared. The validity indices for Tallquist were sensitivity of 89.2%, specificity of 98.1%,
136 positive predictive value of 99.2% and negative predictive value of 80.0% and overall accuracy
137 of 92.0%. While the validity indices for Hemoglobin cyanide method were sensitivity of 96.6%,
138 specificity of 87.4%, positive predictive value of 86% and negative predictive value of 97.0%
139 and overall accuracy of 91.5%. The Tallquist method still has the potential of detecting and
140 assessing anemia with reasonable and acceptable sensitivity, specificity and overall accuracy. It
141 is inexpensive, rapid, and simple unlike the Hemoglobin cyanide method and thus mostly
142 appropriate tool used in remote/rural communities where there is no laboratory or where
143 laboratories and hospitals are faced with serious problems of health financing and unequipped
144 facilities. The cross-sectional study design used in this study is a limitation to the results of this
145 study. This is because it cannot be established whether anemia preceded the predisposing factors
146 or vice versa. The study design could not also identify causes of anemia in pregnant women
147 during their second trimester. Pregnant women who were ill or admitted to the hospital who were
148 excluded from the study could have lowered the prevalence of anemia in this study sample.

149 CONCLUSION

150 The overall prevalence of anemia in this study was 36.0% from Tallquist method, 36.7% from the
151 hemoglobin cyanide method and 47.3% from the hematocrit PCV. The overall accuracy of the
152 Tallquist method was 92.0% and that of the Hemoglobin cyanide method was 91.5%. The
153 Tallquist method is a suitable option of assessing anaemia where there is no laboratory or
154 equipped hospital in rural settings. We recommend that an awareness campaign on the

155 consequences of anemia during pregnancy be given to women of child bearing age and pregnant
156 women in particular. Nutritional counseling on consumption of iron-rich foods and iron/folate
157 supplementation are highly recommended. Routine screening and deworming of pregnant
158 women infected with intestinal parasites is also recommended.

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