

Iron status of institutionalised geriatric subjects

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Anaemia due to iron deficiency is a major problem in developing countries.

The iron status was determined in randomly selected geriatric subjects in two 'Homes for the aged'. The first group comprised of 31 males and 31 females, while the second group comprised of 34 females.

The daily dietary intake of iron was low in females and was below the recommended daily allowance in many females. Both groups of females also had significantly lower haemoglobin concentrations and lower mean transferrin saturation values than males. In addition, both males and females had low plasma ascorbic acid levels.

Thus a markedly higher incidence of iron deficiency was observed among elderly females than males. This could be attributed to depletion of iron stores during child bearing years, coupled with subsistence on marginally low intakes and malabsorption during later years.