

## Anemia Among Pregnant Women in Kuwait: Findings from Kuwait Birth Cohort Study

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**Abstract :** Background: Anemia during pregnancy increases the risk of delivery by cesarean section, low birth weight, preterm birth, perinatal mortality, stillbirth, and maternal mortality. In this study, we aimed to assess the prevalence of anemia in pregnant women and its associated factors in the Kuwait birth cohort study. Methods: The Kuwait birth cohort (N=1108) was a prospective cohort study in which pregnant women were recruited in the third trimester. Data were collected through personal interviews with mothers who attend antenatal care visits, including data on socio-economic status and lifestyle factors. Blood samples were taken after the recruitment to measure multiple laboratory indicators. Clinical data were extracted from the medical records by a clinician including data on comorbidities. Anemia was defined as having Hemoglobin (Hb) <110 g/L with further classification as mild (100-109 g/L), moderate (70-99 g/L), or severe (<70 g/L). Predictors of anemia were classified as underlying or direct factors, and logistic regression was used to investigate their association with anemia. Results: The mean Hb level in the study group was 115.21 g/L (95%CI: 114.56- 115.87 g/L), with significant differences between age groups (p=0.034). The prevalence of anemia was 28.16% (95%CI: 25.53-30.91%), with no significant difference by age group (p=0.164). Of all 1108 pregnant women, 8.75% had moderate anemia, and 19.40% had mild anemia, but no pregnant women had severe anemia. In multivariable analysis, getting pregnant while using contraception, adjusted odds ratio (AOR) 1.73(95%CI:1.01-2.96); p=0.046 and current use of supplements, AOR 0.50 (95%CI: 0.26-0.95); p=0.035 were significantly associated with anemia (underlying factors). From the direct factors group, only iron and ferritin levels were significantly associated with anemia (P<0.001). Conclusion: Although the severe form of anemia is low among pregnant women in Kuwait, mild and moderate anemia remains a significant health problem despite free access to antenatal care.

**Keywords :** anemia, pregnancy, hemoglobin, ferritin

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