VITAMIN A DEFICIENCY AMONG PREGNANT WOMEN

Impact indicator

Indicator Phrasing

English: % of women who suffered from night blindness during last pregnancy

French: % de femmes ayant souffert de cécité nocturne au cours de leur dernière grossesse

Portuguese: % de mulheres que sofreram de cegueira nocturna durante a última gravidez

Czech: % žen, které byly během posledního těhotenství postiženy noční slepotou

What is its purpose?

The indicator measures the proportion of women who experienced night blindness during their last pregnancy, a condition in which a person cannot see in dim light. Night blindness is the earliest and easiest-to-measure manifestation of vitamin A deficiency.

How to Collect and Analyse the Required Data

Collect the following data by conducting individual interviews with a representative sample of women of reproductive age:

RECOMMENDED SURVEY QUESTIONS (Q) AND POSSIBLE ANSWERS (A)

Q1: *When did you deliver your youngest child?*

A1: less than 3 years ago / more than 3 years ago

(ask the next question only if she delivered less than 3 years ago)

Q2: *During your last pregnancy, did you have any problem seeing in the daytime?*

A2: yes / no / does not remember

(ask the next question only if the previous answer is NO)

Q3: *During your last pregnancy, did you have any problem seeing in the evening or at nighttime?*

A3: yes / no / does not remember

(ask the next question only if the previous answer is YES)

Q4: *Did you have night blindness?* (use local term that describes the symptom)

A4: yes / no / does not remember

To **calculate the indicator's value,** divide the number of women (who delivered a live baby in the past 3 years) who experienced night blindness by the total number of interviewed women (exclude all who replied "does not remember"). Multiply the result by 100 to convert it to a percentage.

Disaggregate by

Disaggregate the data by wealth.

Important Comments

1) **Do not collect the data from pregnant women** (night blindness usually occurs during the later part of pregnancy, so measuring during pregnancy will likely underestimate the prevalence).

2) Whenever possible, **find and use a local name for night blindness**.

3) According to WHO, the prevalence of night blindness among pregnant women is considered as a **severe public health problem if ≥ 5% of women** in a population have a history of night blindness in their most recent pregnancy which end in a live birth in the previous 3 years.

4) Since the prevalence of night blindness is relatively low, the margin of error must be very low (preferably 0.5); otherwise, it is unlikely that you will be able to objectively assess the impact of your intervention. This requires using a **very large sample of women (ranging from 8,000 to 30,000 women)** and makes assessing vitamin A deficiency quite demanding.

5) **Consult and ideally co-implement the survey with the relevant health authorities**, so that you increase the chances of the results being officially recognized (and ideally also acted upon).

6) Since assessing vitamin A deficiency is quite demanding, before you conduct a new survey, first review the availability of **existing data** – you might be able to use it as your baseline (however, ensure that you will later be able to gain comparable endline data).

E-Questionnaire

- XLS form for electronic data collection - indicator Vitamin A Deficiency Among Pregnant Women

Access Additional Guidance

- WHO (2014) Assessment of Vitamin A Deficiency

- WHO (2012) Assessing Vitamin A Deficiency

- The Journal of Nutrition (2002) Recommendations for Indicators: Night Blindness during Pregnancy