Accelerating anaemia reduction: the WHO comprehensive framework for action

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Nutrition and Food Safety
Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health and Ageing
Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research
Global Neglected Tropical Diseases Control Programme
Global Malaria Programme

Photo credit: WHO/ Fanjan Combrink
Global trends in the prevalence of anaemia
2000–2019

Anaemia defined as haemoglobin concentrations below:
<110 g/L for children and pregnant women
<120 g/L for non-pregnant women

The anaemia problem

2019 Anaemia estimates in the WHO African Region

- **children** 6–59 months of age: 60%
- **pregnant women**: 46%
- **women of reproductive age**: 40%

Prevalence of anaemia in women 15-49 years of age, 2019
Consequences of anaemia

**Health**
- Increased risk of infections and death
- Increased risk of miscarriages, stillbirths, prematurity and low birth weight
- Extreme fatigue and lethargy

**Development**
- Lower cognition
- Poorer growth and development

**Economic**
- Impaired physical productivity and work performance
- Loss of earnings
WHO Comprehensive framework for action to accelerate anaemia reduction

- **Objective**: Translate current evidence for effective action leading to anaemia reduction and improved health

- **Purpose**:
  - Address persistent issue of anaemia through country-specific interventions and available delivery platforms; and
  - Create shared understanding and build commitment to strengthen the multisectoral response to reducing anaemia.

https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240074033
Comprehensive framework

## Action areas for accelerating anaemia reduction

### Analyse data on causes and risk factors for anaemia

Ensure diagnostics tools available for collection of data, and appropriate analysis and interpretation to understand context-specific causes and risk factors of anaemia

### Prioritize key preventive and therapeutic interventions

Use of data to select effective interventions for reducing anaemia in that context

### Optimize service delivery across platforms and sectors

Collaboration among implementing sectors to drive effective coverage of the relevant package of interventions

Build on existing platforms to reduce fragmentation across sectors as address causes, risk factors and improve quality and coverage of interventions

### Strengthen leadership, coordination, and governance at all levels

Incorporate shared tasks and indicators into workplans across sectors, to hold leaders accountable

### Expand research, learning and innovation

Implementation research needed for addressing how best to improve the design and delivery of interventions to enhance their reach, effectiveness in different contexts, and return on investment
Actions to reduce anaemia by sector

**Labor, Trade & Industry**
- Promote girls’ and women’s economic empowerment
- Workplace screening for anaemia, nutrition education and provision of nutritious meals
- Raise public awareness about anaemia

**Health & Nutrition**
- Promote healthy diets through behaviour change communication
- Improve micronutrient intakes (micronutrient powders and supplements)
- Improve maternal health
- Screen for and manage haemoglobinopathies
- Prevent, diagnose and treat malaria, HIV, TB, and other infections
- Prevent, diagnose and treat sexually transmitted infections
- Manage heavy menstrual bleeding
- Promote birth spacing, access to and voluntary use of modern contraceptives
- Prevent and treat antenatal and postpartum haemorrhage
- Reduce unnecessary caesarian section
- Delay umbilical cord clamping following childbirth
- Prevent and treat anemia
- Promote and use of vitamin A supplementation
- Promote and use of iron and folic acid tablets
- Promote exclusive breastfeeding
- Promote mixed feeding
- Promote timely complementary feeding
- Promote healthy dietary practices
- Promote safe food production and handling

**Education**
- Promote girls’ and women’s general education and education on nutrition and reproductive health
- Public health and health care provider messaging about causes and consequences of anaemia
- Public awareness about inherited red blood cell disorders
- Social and behaviour change communication strategies
- Provision of nutritious school meals

**Water, sanitation & hygiene (WASH)**
- Improve access to safe drinking water
- Promote hand hygiene
- Strengthen safe sanitation systems and practices (access to and use of toilets that safely contain excreta; access to safe systems along the entire sanitation service chain)

**Social protection**
- Promote gender equality and women’s empowerment (including education and income-generating activities, cash or food transfers with behaviour change communication)
- Improve access to quality health care services and interventions
- Promote core components of the right to health (availability, accessibility, acceptability, quality)
- Provide vouchers for nutritious foods
Key messages

- The framework recognizes anaemia as a cross-cutting issue and suggests essential action areas and interventions to address it, based on country-specific data and available delivery platforms.

- Anaemia has primarily been addressed through the nutrition lens, which is critical but not sufficient alone; rather, all causes must be addressed to effectively prevent and treat anaemia.

- Effective coverage of a package of interventions to address anaemia at key moments in the life course is foundational for improving health and well-being, and for preventing the irreversible consequences of anaemia.

- Addressing the complex condition of anaemia demands strong leadership and collective action among multiple sectors.
Thank you for your time and attention

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