

Managing Pediatric Anaemia and Improving Quality of Life in Children

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ABOUT THE STUDY

Anaemia, characterized by a deficiency of red blood cells or hemoglobin, is a common concern in pediatric healthcare. This condition can affect a child's energy levels, growth, and overall well-being. Proper management of anaemia not only explains the underlying causes but also significantly improves the quality of life for affected children.

Pediatric anaemia

Anaemia in children can arise from various causes, including nutritional deficiencies, chronic illnesses, and genetic disorders. The most common types include iron deficiency anaemia, vitamin B12 deficiency anaemia, and anaemia related to chronic diseases.

Iron deficiency anaemia: This is the most prevalent form of anaemia in children, often due to insufficient iron intake or absorption. Iron is essential for producing hemoglobin, the protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen throughout the body.

Vitamin B12 deficiency anaemia: Vitamin B12 is vital for red blood cell production. A deficiency can result from dietary insufficiencies or absorption issues.

Anaemia due to chronic diseases: Conditions like chronic kidney disease or inflammatory disorders can interfere with red blood cell production or lifespan.

Diagnostic approaches

Diagnosing anaemia typically involves a thorough medical history, physical examination, and blood tests. A Complete Blood Count (CBC) is commonly used to assess red blood cell levels and hemoglobin concentrations. Additional tests might include serum ferritin, vitamin B12 levels, and assessments for underlying conditions. Accurate diagnosis is essential for modifying the treatment to the specific type of anaemia and its cause.

Treatment strategies

Treatment for pediatric anaemia requires a modified approach based on its underlying cause. For iron deficiency anaemia,

enhancing dietary intake of iron-rich foods like lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, and fortified cereals is essential. To improve iron absorption, these foods should be paired with vitamin C-rich options such as oranges and bell peppers. Supplementation with iron tablets or liquid supplements is often necessary, especially when dietary intake alone is insufficient. Vitamin B12 deficiency anaemia requires dietary changes to include B12-rich foods such as eggs, dairy products, and fortified cereals. In some cases, oral supplements or injections may be prescribed depending on the severity of the deficiency.

When anaemia results from chronic conditions, managing the primary illness, such as chronic kidney disease or inflammatory disorders, is vital to alleviating anaemia symptoms. For severe anaemia cases where immediate correction is needed, blood transfusions may be used to quickly address low red blood cell levels. Regular follow-up is vital to monitor treatment effectiveness, make necessary adjustments, and ensure the child's overall health improves. This comprehensive approach helps address both the symptoms and the underlying causes of anaemia, improving the child's overall well-being.

Enhancing quality of life

Beyond medical treatment, improving a child's quality of life involves addressing the broader impact of anaemia on their daily activities and overall well-being.

Regular monitoring and follow-up: on-going monitoring is essential to track the effectiveness of treatment and make necessary adjustments. Regular follow-up visits with healthcare providers ensure that any changes in the child's condition are promptly addressed and that the treatment plan remains effective.

Education and support: Educating parents and caregivers about anaemia and its management helps them make informed decisions regarding their child's diet and treatment. Support groups and educational resources can provide additional guidance and emotional support.

Lifestyle modifications: Encouraging a balanced diet that supports overall health and energy levels is beneficial. Ensuring that children

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get adequate rest and engage in appropriate physical activities can also contribute to their well-being. Avoiding excessive physical strain and managing fatigue through structured rest periods are important.

Emotional and social support: Anaemia can impact a child's emotional health and social interactions. Providing a supportive environment at home and school helps children cope with the challenges of their condition. Encouraging open communication

and addressing any emotional or social concerns can significantly improve their quality of life.

Encouraging healthy habits: Promoting healthy habits such as regular hand washing, proper hygiene, and avoiding infections can help prevent complications associated with anaemia. Ensuring that children are up-to-date on vaccinations and practicing good health habits are key components of overall care.