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### Update and dilemmas in iron therapy

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Iron Deficiency Anemia (IDA) is a common global problem, particularly in the under-developed countries. The highest prevalence of IDA (60% to 80%) is seen in India, with about 74% of Indian children between the ages of 6 months to 3 years affected. Iron is critical for the human immune system and erythropoiesis and is also integral to the metabolic pathways of pathogens. The complex interactions of anemia, iron deficiency and the immune system may confound the management of these cases. The general pediatrician needs to be aware of the various issues regarding diagnosis of IDA and the dose and duration of iron therapy. It is also important to keep in consideration other issues of iron therapy such as bioavailability, tolerance, drug interactions, dysbiosis and effect on immunity. This review focuses on the dilemmas of iron therapy and highlight recent updates, such as optimal time of instituting treatment, newer iron preparations, benefits of intermittent administration, dysbiosis and risk of infections on iron therapy. There is need for further research to formulate universal practice guidelines for pediatricians on this complex issue.

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