SUMMARY

Introduction: Anaemia among children under the age of five years remains relatively high in developing countries. The risk factors associated with anaemia vary from developed to developing societies, among socioeconomic groups and from different seasons of the year. Assessment of its main risk factors is important to plan preventive interventions.

Aim and objectives: The study was designed to determine the prevalence and main risk factors of anaemia in the children under the age of five years in Zamko village and to determine the association of demographic and social variables to anaemia in children under the age of five years.

Method: A cross sectional community-based study was carried out on 370 children under the age of five years. This was done during the peak period of malaria transmission between the months of July and September, 2005 using the World Health Organization (WHO) Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) survey sampling technique. A questionnaire was used to obtain information on the biodata and nutritional history of the children, socio-economic and demographic status of the family such as the size of household, occupation as well as educational status of the parents. Anthropometric data, blood and stool samples were collected.

Analysis: Chi-square, P-values and logistic regression analyses were used to determine risk factors associated with anaemia, defined as haemoglobin <11 g/dl.

Result: The prevalence of anaemia was 64.3 percent in the study population. Malaria parasitaemia was the most significant risk factor associated with anaemia (Odds Ratio=3.92 p<0.001) followed by iron deficiency (Odds Ratio=2.69 p<0.001).

Conclusion: The findings of this study revealed high prevalence of anaemia, a level consistent with WHO criteria of severe public health problem. Prevention strategies in the village should
focus more on malaria and iron deficiency.