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Compliance to weekly iron and folic acid supplementation among adolescent school girls: A study from rural Karnataka.

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ABSTRACT

Background: In India adolescent anemia is a major public health problem. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched the Weekly Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation (WIFS) program to reduce the prevalence and severity of nutritional anemia in adolescent population. Weekly iron folic supplementation has fewer side effects and lower costs. **Objectives:** To assess compliance, side effects and the reasons for non-compliance to Iron and Folic Acid tablets among study participants. **Materials and methods:** This prospective study was undertaken in the rural field practice area of the JJM Medical College, Davangere for the period of one year. Total 175 adolescent girls aged 11-15 years were recruited for the study. **Results:** In the present study average compliance rate was 58.4%. In the first quarter of study period, nausea (7%), constipation (5%) and stomach pain (4%) were the most common side effects reported by study participants. The side effects were reduced from 22% to 11% at the end of the study period. **Conclusion:** In the current study, the compliance rate was good during school days but it was poor during school vacations. The main reasons for non-compliance was forgetfulness and fear of side effects to IFA tablets.

Key Words: weekly Iron and Folic Acid supplementation (WIFS), adolescent girls, anemia.