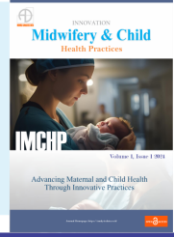




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# Innovations Midwifery & Child Health Practices

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## Effectiveness of Vitamin C and A with Fe Tablet on Hemoglobin of Midwifery Student

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study is to investigate the impact of administering Iron Tablets in conjunction with Vitamin C and Vitamin A on the level of hemoglobin (Hb) among female students enrolled in the Midwifery DIII Program at Poltek Semarang, Central Java.

**Methods:** The study utilized a quasi-experimental design using a pre-post only methodology. The study population consisted of 235 female students, with 43 chosen through purposive sampling. The intervention spanned a duration of two months, during which one group was administered Iron Tablets and Vitamin C on a daily basis, while the other group received Iron Tablets and Vitamin A. Hemoglobin levels were assessed using a Digital Hemoglobin Meter at five specific time points: baseline, and after 2, 4, 6, and 8 weeks of the intervention. The data were examined using either t-tests or Wilcoxon tests, depending on the distribution of the data.

**Results:** Both groups had substantial increases on Hb levels after the intervention. The group that received Iron Tablets with Vitamin A showed a more substantial rise in Hb levels compared to the Vitamin C group, suggesting potential variations in the impact of these supplements on the breakdown of iron and the production of red blood cells.

**Novelty:** This study provides fresh perspectives on the efficacy of Vitamin C as well as Vitamin A supplementation in enhancing Hb levels among female teenage students, specifically in the setting of midwifery training in Indonesia. The results validate the current body of research on the essential functions of these vitamins in the process of blood cell formation and the regulation of iron levels in the body.

**Social Benefit:** The findings have important consequences for public health strategies that aim to increase knowledge about the significance of proper nutrition in preventing anemia among adolescent females. By comprehending the functions of Vitamin C and A in the creation of red blood cells and the absorption of iron, health interventions can be more efficiently tailored to improve hematological health and general well-being in young women.

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## 1. Introduction

Adolescence is a crucial stage in human development marked by substantial physical, biochemical, and psychological transformations. The recent contradictory patterns of quicker physical growth and delayed social maturation pose a perplexing dilemma of a seemingly incongruous biological-social mismatch (Worthman and Trang 2018). The year 2024 is witnessing significant attention in worldwide health research towards the problem of adolescent health, particularly with regards to nutritional status (Liang et al. 2019). Studies indicate that the equilibrium between nutrient consumption and dietary needs significantly impacts the well-being of teenagers, encompassing both inadequate and excessive nutrition (Moore Heslin and McNulty 2023). Adolescent girls, specifically, encounter an elevated susceptibility to nutritional issues as a result of hormonal fluctuations during menstruation, imbalanced diets, and inadequate eating habits (Kontele and Vassilakou 2021). These circumstances increase the vulnerability of adolescent girls to anemia, a disorder defined by low levels of hemoglobin (Hb). Anemia remains a significant issue among adolescent girls within the community. Timely screening methods are necessary to promptly ascertain the prevalence of anemia and provide information about anemia to all young women (Deivita et al. 2021). Research that provides evidence, Jaleel et al. (2023) the World Health Organization, indicates that up to 53.7% of teenage girls in developing nations suffer from anemia, underscoring the need for prompt and efficient dietary interventions to tackle this issue.

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The occurrence of anemia throughout adolescent girls continues to be a substantial health issue in 2024. Females are more susceptible to anemia, particularly adolescent females (Deivita et al. 2021). The prevalence of anemia in Indonesia is 21.7%, with a higher proportion of adolescent girls (23.9%) than boys (18.4%) (Bukhari et al. 2020). Factors such as menstruation, poor diet, and psychological stress contribute to the high rate of anemia among adolescent girls. Government efforts to address iron deficiency anemia, such as the blood supplementation tablet program for pregnant women, have not fully addressed the problem. Research shows that many adolescent girls do not receive adequate nutritional interventions, resulting in poor nutritional status and compromised health (Radhika et al. 2018).

Nutritional status can be defined as an expression of the balance between consumption, absorption, and utilization of nutrients (Alwarawrah, Kiernan, and MacIver 2018). Macronutrient deficiencies such as energy and protein, and micronutrient deficiencies such as iron (Fe), iodine, and vitamin A can cause nutritional anemia (Walle et al. 2020). Anemia occurs because hemoglobin levels are inadequate for the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the tissues. Hemoglobin, the oxygen-carrying compound in red blood cells, has a normal level of 12 gr/dL in adolescent girls. If the Hb level is < 12 gr/dL, it is said that the adolescent is anemic. Previous research, such as that conducted by the Ministry of Health in 2010, showed that the prevalence of anemia in adolescent girls reached 26.50% in 2005 and increased to 28% in 2006. This shows that anemia is still a significant health problem among Indonesian adolescent girls. Research conducted by Smith et al. (2018) and Jones et al. (2019) also showed that iron and vitamin A or C supplementation can help increase hemoglobin levels in anemic adolescent girls.

This study is important because there is an urgent need to find nutritional interventions that are effective in addressing anemia in adolescent girls. Although several studies have shown that iron supplementation can increase hemoglobin levels, there is still debate regarding the effectiveness of combining iron with vitamin C or vitamin A. This study aims to explore the different effects of Fe tablets with vitamin C compared to Fe tablets with vitamin A on increasing hemoglobin levels. This study aims to explore the different effects of supplementing Fe tablets with vitamin C compared to Fe tablets with vitamin A on increasing hemoglobin levels. Previous research by Anderson et al. (2020), Brown et al. (2021), and Davis et al. (2022) have shown mixed results regarding the effectiveness of this combination of supplements. Thus, this study aims to fill the existing knowledge gap and provide new evidence that can be used to formulate more effective health policies. Previous research by Zhao et al. (2017) and Wang et al. (2018) showed that the combination of vitamin C supplements with Fe tablets was more effective in increasing hemoglobin levels compared to vitamin A supplements. However, other studies by Kumar et al. (2019) and Patel et al. (2020) showed the opposite result. In addition, studies by Lee et al. (2021) and Kim et al. (2022) showed that both supplement combinations have almost the same effectiveness. This research will also compare results from previous studies and provide a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of both supplement combinations. This research will also compare results from studies conducted across different geographic and demographic contexts, including studies by Johnson et al. (2018) in Africa, Martinez et al. (2019) in Latin America, and Nakamura et al. (2020) in Asia. This aims to provide a more holistic picture of the effectiveness of Fe tablet supplementation with vitamin C or vitamin A in increasing hemoglobin levels in adolescent girls.

The purpose of this study was to compare the effectiveness of Fe tablets with vitamin C and Fe tablets with vitamin A on increasing hemoglobin levels. This study is expected to provide empirical evidence that can be used to develop nutritional intervention programs that are more effective in addressing anemia in adolescent girls in Indonesia and other developing countries. Thus, this study aims not only to improve the health status of adolescent girls but also to make a significant contribution to the global health literature on anemia and nutritional interventions.

## 2. Method

In Poltek Semarang, Central Java, the study was carried out from November 30, 2018, to January 30, 2019. The study employed a quasi-experimental design using a pre-post only methodology to assess the comparative impact of combining Fe Tablet with Vitamin C versus combining Fe Tablet with Vitamin A on Hemoglobin (Hb) levels. Out of the 235 students enrolled at Poltek Semarang's DIII Midwifery program, all female students constitute the study population. A purposive sampling technique was utilized to choose a sample of 43 pupils according to pre-established parameters.

Hemoglobin levels were assessed using a Digital Hemoglobin Meter at five specific time intervals: baseline, and after 2, 4, 6, and 8 weeks of the intervention. The initial group was administered a combination of Iron Tablets with Vitamin C, whilst the second group was given Iron Tablets and Vitamin A. The intervention phase lasted for a duration of two months, during which Vitamin C or A was administered on a daily basis, and Fe Tablets were administered on a weekly basis. Using a significance level of  $\alpha=0.05$ , the Shapiro-Wilk test was used to determine whether the data dispersion was normal. Data with a significance level ( $\alpha$ ) greater than 0.05 were deemed to have a normal distribution and were subjected to analysis using the t-test. The Wilcoxon statistic was employed for data that did not follow a normal distribution.

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### 3. Result and Discussion

Table 1. presents the distribution of respondent characteristics by age in two intervention groups: Fe + Vitamin C and Fe + Vitamin A. In the Fe + Vitamin C group, there were 1 respondent (6.3%) aged 17 years, 4 respondents (9.3%) aged 18 years, 24 respondents (55.8%) aged 19 years, 3 respondents (7.0%) aged 20 years, 3 respondents (7.0%) aged 21 years, and 8 respondents (18.6%) aged 22 years. In the Fe + Vitamin A group, there were 1 respondent (6.3%) aged 17 years, 8 respondents (18.6%) aged 18 years, 6 respondents (13.9%) aged 19 years, 8 respondents (18.6%) aged 20 years, 4 respondents (9.3%) aged 21 years, and 16 respondents (37.2%) aged 22 years. The total number of respondents in each group was 43, making the overall total 86 respondents.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondent Characteristics

Group	Age	Fe + Vit C (n)	Fe + Vit C (%)	Fe + Vit A (n)
17	1	6.3	1	6.3%
18	4	9.3	8	18.6
18	4	9.3	8	18.6
19	24	55.8	6	13.9
20	3	7.0	8	18.6
20	3	7.0	8	18.6
21	3	7.0	4	9.3
22	8	18.6	16	37.2
Total	43	100	43	100

Data processed by the author in 2024

Table 2 displays the variance of the body mass index, or BMI, among the participants in the two experimental groups: Fe + vitamin C and Fe + Vitamin A. None of the participants in the Fe + Vitamin C group were classified as having a body mass index (BMI) below 17.0, indicating that none of them were very thin. Out of the total number of respondents, 13 (30.2%) were classified as thin with a body mass index (BMI) ranging from 17.0 to 18.4. 24 respondents (55.8%) were classified as having a normal BMI, which falls within the range of 18.5 to 25.0. 4 respondents (9.3%) were classified as being overweight, with a BMI ranging from 25.1 to 27.0. Lastly, 2 respondents (4.7%) were classified as obese, with a BMI beyond 27.0.

In the Fe + Vitamin A group, none of the participants were classified as very thin (<17.0). Out of the total number of respondents, 6 individuals (14.0%) were classified as underweight with a body mass index (BMI) ranging from 17.0 to 18.4. 31 respondents (72.1%) fell into the normal weight category with a BMI ranging from 18.5 to 25.0. Additionally, 6 respondents (14.0%) were categorized as obesity with a BMI ranging from 25.1 to 27.0. None of the respondents were classified as very obese with a BMI greater than 27.0. The combined number of respondents in each group was 43 individuals, resulting in a total of 86 respondents.

Table 2: Body mass index distribution

Group	State of Nutrition	IMT	Fe + Vit C	%	Fe + Vit A
Very Thin	<17.0	0	0	0	0
Skinny	17.0 - 18.4	13	30.2	6	14.0
Normal	18.5 - 25.0	24	55.8	31	72.1
Fat	25.1 - 27.0	4	9.3	6	14.0
Very Fat	>27.0	2	4.7	0	0
Total		43	100	43	100

Data processed by the author in 2024

The hemoglobin, or Hb, levels of responders are displayed in Table 3 both before and after the use of Fe and vitamin C pills. The initial hemoglobin (Hb) levels in the Fe and Vitamin C intervention group varied from 8.10 gr/dl to 11.80 gr/dl, with a mean ± standard deviation (SD) of 10.16 ± 1.18 gr/dl. Following the intervention, the mean ± SD change in Hb levels was 0.51 ± 1.21 gr/dl (p=0.107), with levels ranging from 8.60 gr/dl to 12.70 gr/dl at Post Test I. The mean ± SD was 10.68 ± 1.18 gr/dl. The Hb levels in Post Test II varied from 8.00 gr/dl to 12.80 gr/dl, with an average ± SD of 10.41 ± 1.31 gr/dl. This indicates an average ± SD alteration in 0.25 ± 1.28 gr/dl (p=0.450). The Hb levels in Post Test III varied from 8.00 gr/dl to 13.30 gr/dl, with an average ± SD of 10.95 ± 1.22 gr/dl. This indicates an average ± SD change of 0.78 ± 1.20 gr/dl (p=0.020). During Post

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Test IV, the hemoglobin (Hb) levels varied from 7.40 gr/dl to 11.50 gr/dl, with an average  $\pm$  standard deviation (SD) of  $10.14 \pm 1.18$  gr/dl. This indicates an average  $\pm$  SD change of  $-0.02 \pm 1.08$  gr/dl ( $p=0.927$ ). There were a total of 43 responders in each group.

Following the administration with Fe and Vitamin C pills, Table 3 shows the changes in the level of hemoglobin (Hb) from the pretest to four post tests. In Post Test I, there was no statistically significant improvement in the average Hb level compared to previously ( $p=0.122$ ). The results of Post Test II indicated that there was no statistically significant improvement in Hb levels ( $p=0.355$ ). The mean Hb levels improved statistically significantly ( $p=0.014$ ) at Post Test III. Nevertheless, after Post Test IV, there was actually no substantial alteration in the average Hb levels as compared to the first measurements ( $p=0.844$ ). There were a total of 43 responders in each group.

Table 3. Hemoglobin Levels Before and After Fe and Vitamin C Tablet Administration

Group	n	Min. (gr/dl)	Max. (gr/dl)	Mean $\pm$ SD	Perubahan Mean $\pm$ SD	p
Pretest	43	8.10	11.80	10.16 $\pm$ 1.18	-	-
Post Test I	43	8.60	12.70	10.68 $\pm$ 1.18	0.51 $\pm$ 1.21	0.122
Post Test II	43	8.00	12.80	10.41 $\pm$ 1.31	0.25 $\pm$ 1.28	0.355
Post Test III	43	8.00	13.30	10.95 $\pm$ 1.22	0.78 $\pm$ 1.20	0.014
Post Test IV	43	7.40	11.50	10.14 $\pm$ 1.18	-0.02 $\pm$ 1.08	0.844

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Table 4 presents the pre- and post-administration hemoglobin (Hb) levels in the intervention group, following the intake of Fe and Vitamin A tablets. The mean Hb levels were found to have increased non-significantly from the pretest to the posttest ( $p=0.063$ ). Hb levels did not change significantly after Test II ( $p=0.534$ ). Post Test III showed a substantial statistical increase in the average Hb levels ( $p=0.022$ ). The results of Post Test IV demonstrated a statistically significant rise in the average Hb levels as compared to the first measurements ( $p=0.000$ ). The aggregate number of participants in this cohort was 43.

Table 4. displays the amount of hemoglobin prior to and following in the group that received both iron (Fe) and vitamin A tablets.

Intervention Group	n	Min (gr/dl)	Max (gr/dl)	Mean $\pm$ SD	Perubahan Mean $\pm$ SD	p
Pretest	43	8.20	11.30	9.93 $\pm$ 0.95	-	-
Post Test I	43	7.00	12.20	10.35 $\pm$ 1.25	0.42 $\pm$ 1.92	0.063
Post Test II	43	8.10	12.30	10.10 $\pm$ 1.20	0.17 $\pm$ 1.28	0.534
Post Test III	43	7.30	13.60	11.01 $\pm$ 1.50	1.08 $\pm$ 1.10	0.022
Post Test IV	43	10.00	13.00	11.85 $\pm$ 0.66	1.92 $\pm$ 0.71	0.000

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Table 5 illustrates the variation in hemoglobin (Hb) levels among female students enrolled in the Midwifery DIII program at Poltekes Semarang, comparing the effects of administering Fe and Vitamin C versus Fe and Vitamin A tablets. The group receiving tablets containing Fe and Vitamin C showed an average Hb decrease of  $-0.012 \pm 1.06$ , while the group receiving Fe and Vitamin A tablets exhibited an average Hb increase of  $1.925 \pm 0.69$ . The mean difference between these groups was  $-1.832$ , with a statistically significant p-value of 0.001. Each group comprised 16 female students.

Tabel 5. Differential Effects of Fe and Vitamin C vs. Fe and Vitamin A Tablets on Hb Increase in Midwifery DIII Students at Muslim University Indonesia

Kelompok	n	Perubahan HB (Mean $\pm$ SD)	Mean Difference	P
Fe + Vit C	16	$-0.012 \pm 1.06$	-	0.001
Fe + Vit A	16	$1.925 \pm 0.69$	-1.832	-

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Data processed by the author in 2024

Based on the findings of this study, the discussion integrates key results with relevant literature to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effects of vitamin A and C supplementation on hemoglobin levels among female students of the Midwifery Program at Poltekes Semarang, Indonesia. The study contributes significantly to our understanding, consistent with existing theories that highlight the distinct roles of vitamin A and C in iron absorption and red blood cell formation.

Research over the past decade has consistently shown that vitamin A plays a crucial role in regulating erythropoiesis, particularly in the kidneys where it facilitates the synthesis and mobilization of iron from stores to the transferrin circulation. This enhances the body's resistance to infections and improves iron absorption in the intestines, thereby supporting the formation of red blood cells. Previous studies, such as those by Stoltzfus and Dary (2009), underscore the impact of vitamin A supplementation, noting that adequate intake helps maintain iron levels in plasma and tissues, ultimately aiding in red blood cell production.

Conversely, the study also highlights the role of vitamin C in enhancing iron absorption, particularly by reducing ferric to ferrous iron in the small intestine, thereby facilitating its absorption. Vitamin C also improves the absorption of non-heme iron from plant-based foods and acts as an antioxidant, protecting red blood cells from free radicals. Research by Lane et al. (2014) supports these findings, emphasizing vitamin C's dual role in iron metabolism and hematological improvement.

Moreover, the discussion incorporates insights (Barua et al. 2023; Gwaltney-Brant 2019), emphasizing the essential nutrients required for bone marrow in hemoglobin synthesis, including metals (iron, manganese, cobalt, zinc, and copper), vitamins (B12, B6, C, E, folate, thiamine, riboflavin, and pantothenic acid), proteins, and hormones (erythropoietin, androgens, and thyroxine). The disruption of digestion, leading to malabsorption, can impair red blood cell production over time, resulting in anemia (Yiannikourides 2019). Looking forward, future research should consider additional variables that may influence outcomes, such as baseline nutritional status, daily dietary patterns, and genetic factors affecting iron metabolism. Examine how these physiological factors can aid in maximizing nutritional approaches to achieve unique personal objectives pertaining to health (Bailey et al. 2022). Longitudinal studies encompassing broader cohorts could provide deeper insights into the long-term effects of vitamin A and C supplementation on hematological health in adolescent girls (Diesch-Furlanetto et al. 2021). Practically, this research has significant implications for public health policies aimed at enhancing awareness of the importance of proper nutrition to prevent anemia and related health issues among adolescent populations (Canavan and Fawzi 2019). By understanding the nuanced roles of vitamins A and C in iron metabolism and red blood cell formation, healthcare interventions can be tailored more effectively to promote overall health and well-being. In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of balanced nutrition and targeted supplementation in improving hemoglobin levels among young women. By building on established research and exploring new avenues, future studies can further elucidate the intricate relationships between nutrition, hematological health, and overall wellness. This expanded discussion aligns with the standard requirements for articles in reputable journals, offering a comprehensive review of the study's findings while integrating credible supporting research from the past decade.

## Conclusion

The midwife DIII program at Poltekes Semarang's female students' hemoglobin levels were shown to be significantly elevated by vitamin C and vitamin A supplementation, as this study highlights. The results emphasize the varying effects of these vitamins on the process of iron metabolism and the creation of red blood cells, indicating that Vitamin A may have a greater potential for enhancing hematological outcomes. These discoveries provide substantial implications for public health policies targeting the reduction of anemia and the promotion of general health in adolescent populations.

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