

Conquering Anemia in Haiti Using Local Foods



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Background

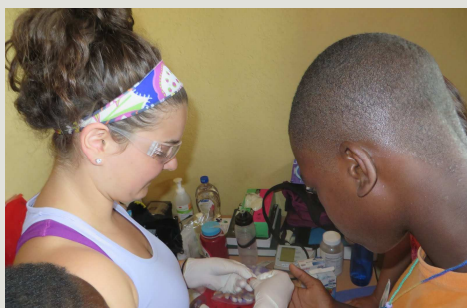
- Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, with 56% of Haitians living in extreme poverty
- 60% of Haitian children living in Port Au Prince are anemic
- Consequences of anemia are impaired learning, physical fatigue, and reduced work capacities which influence the national economy.
- Anemia rates in Haitian children are 93% higher than rates in American children



Purpose: Can anemia be reduced by making simple dietary changes to improve the quality of the Haitian diet?

Methods

- Identified Grace Village School through Kristina DeMuth, RD, CSB alum, who is working to improve their diet
 - Changing the native diet using sustainable foods to improve nutritional intake
- Obtained CSB|SJU Institution Review Board approval and permission from Healing Haiti, sponsors of Grace Village
- Analyzed blood samples of 39 participants using HemoCue Hb 201



Grace Village Typical Daily Intake

Before

Breakfast: 1-2 Cups pasta with ½ hot dog cut up and oil. 8 oz. juice

Lunch: Corn meal with beans, oil sauce and 1 oz. beef, 8 oz watermelon juice

Dinner: "Oatmeal" made with flour, milk sugar and vanilla

- 1296 Calories
- 36 g protein
- 229 g carb
- 4 mg iron
- 45 mg Vitamin C
- No whole fruits, ¼ c veggies



After

Breakfast: 2 scrambled eggs with yams, 2 oz. fish and sauce

Lunch: Black bean soup with plantains, dumplings, avocado and tomato

Snack: Peanut butter graham crackers

Dinner: Black bean and ble (wheat) burger with pineapple and ketchup

- 1240 Calories
- 56 g protein
- 166 g carb
- 12 mg iron
- 74 mg Vitamin C
- 2 c fruit, 2 ¼ c veggies



Dietary Changes-

- ↑ amount of plant based protein in diet
- Tripled dietary iron intake
- ↑ Vitamin C intake: iron absorption from plants is enhanced by consumption with vitamin C and small amounts of heme iron at each meal

Results

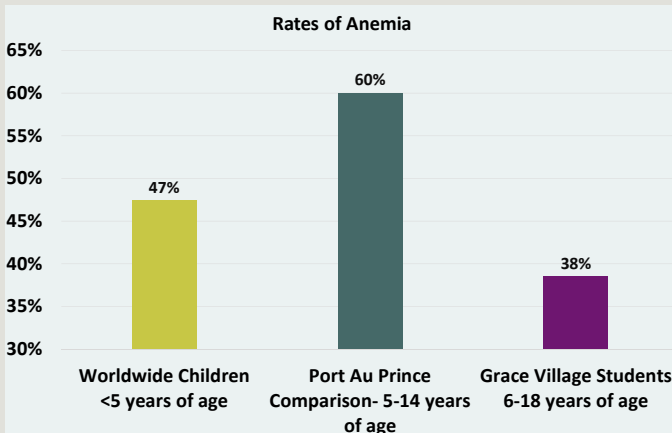


Table 1: Grace Village Student Data

| Age Group | Number | Percent Anemic | Anemia Cutoff mg/dl | Average Hemoglobin | Average Weight (lbs) | Average Height (In) | Average BMI |
|-----------------|--------|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Children | | | | | | | |
| 5-8 | 9 | 56% | 11.5 | 11.3 | 57 | 51 | 15 |
| 8-12 | 6 | 66% | 11.9 | 11.6 | 59 | 51 | 16 |
| Females | | | | | | | |
| 12-15 | 6 | 0% | 11.8 | 13.0 | 98 | 61 | 18 |
| Males | | | | | | | |
| 12-15 | 8 | 38% | 12.5 | 12.4 | 90 | 61 | 16 |
| Females | | | | | | | |
| >15 | 4 | 25% | 12 | 12.9 | 100 | 59 | 20 |

Conclusions

- Grace Village anemia rates were 36% lower than comparable children in Port Au Prince and 18% lower than global anemia rates
- Rather than using iron supplements, diet was improved by incorporating local sustainable foods
- Diet changes were achieved without increasing school food costs making this realistic and feasible
- 38% with anemia is still higher than desirable
- Higher anemia rates in children 5-12 influenced by the recent arrival of 4 children who were malnourished
- A limitation of this study is that no previous hemoglobin values were available for direct comparison, and some children had lived in Grace Village less than 3 months.
- These diet changes go against traditional Haitian food patterns and were not consistently followed initially; successful implementation requires regular education and positive reinforcement of staff



Acknowledgements

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