

Folic Acid Awareness in Public Health

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It has been twenty nine years since the publication of research of the role of folic acid in plays in the prevention of neural tube defects (NTDs). Folic acid is a B - vitamin that is beneficial for cell growth. Research has proven if taken prior and during pregnancy it can prevent serious birth defects. Folic acid awareness is observed in January each year. Aimed to increase awareness and educate the public of role, importance, recommended intakes and sources of Folic acid. Many countries have taken the recommendation from World health organization and World health association as a serious public health issue and have incorporated in policies for women of child bearing potential to take 400 micrograms daily before conception until week twelve of pregnancy. For most women this is not the case, intake takes place after conception. There is sufficient evidence to conclude preconception and 12 weeks into pregnancy is preventive. A population wide food fortification recommendation has not been taken on board in many countries. Many women are not aware of the benefits of folic acid supplementation. Many pregnancies, abortions and miscarriages have occurred which could have been avoided by a simple act. Many women do not know the right foods with high folic acid intake.

A quick search of systematic reviews, trials and grey literature shows no sufficient evidence of research available to ensure folic acid awareness in adopted into policy to ensure governments utilize the health care systems to inform the public. Charities and none governmental organizations seem to be taking responsibility to inform the public.

Approximately 800 000 women become pregnant each year globally and screening for the fortunate into second trimester of pregnancy. By that time, some women will have lost the pregnancy or leaves the women to make a difficult choice to abort the pregnancy or continue and have a still birth. This can have serious physical, emotional and mental impacts on the families and women affected.

What's the Folic acid awareness story in Europe?

Eurocat statistics from countries sampled show 26.2 per 10000 births have neural tube defects. This is an indicator that more needs to be done to prevent NTDs. Education and promoting awareness of Folic acid supplementation and increased intake of foods is an approach that can be utilized on the awareness month in January.

Let's celebrate the 30th anniversary with increased publicity.

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