

SALT PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR AND THE PRESENCE OF IODINE DEFICIENCY IN PREGNANT WOMEN IN THAILAND

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SUMMARY: The objective of this study was to analyze the relationship between behavioral factors of pregnant women living in areas with different drinking water fluoride (F) levels and the presence of iodine deficiency. The study had a cross-sectional design and used iodine test results from pregnant women in 4 provinces collected by the Bureau of Nutrition, Department of Health, Ministry of Public Health, in 2011. A form was designed to record information regarding the behavior of the pregnant women as well as other factors that might be related to iodine deficiency. On-site inspections were conducted to gather further information on possible factors related to the presence of iodine deficiency in the pregnant women and to collect data concerning the ground water system used in each village in the selected areas. The information about the water F levels and the community water management systems was collected by the Intercountry Centre for Oral Health. The results showed that if pregnant women purchased salt from local shops, mobile merchants, convenience stores, or any sources other than the official health station, the risk of having iodine deficiency was almost 3 times higher. No other behavioral factors in the pregnant women were found to be related to the presence of iodine deficiency. We concluded that in order to prevent the occurrence of iodine deficiency in pregnant women the quality of the salt sold at all the points of purchase in the area should be controlled.

Key words: Iodine deficiency in pregnancy; Pregnant women; Prevention of iodine deficiency in pregnancy; Sale of noniodized salt.

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