# $\beta$ - THALASSAEMIA MINOR DISEASE AMONG SRI LANKANS

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$\beta$ - thalassaemia minor is a mild form of anaemia in humans and is caused by a semi-dominant gene in the heterozygous condition.

This gene effects the synthesis of the $\beta$-globin chain of haemoglobin and produces severe anaemia in the homozygous state. This condition is called $\beta$ - thalassaemia major which could be detected early in life. Associated with severe anaemia is splenomegaly and deformities of the bone.

$\beta$ - thalassaemia minor is difficult to detect unlike the major, because it is usually symptomless and is traced mainly through predigree analyses. Sixty parents of Sri Lankan thalassaemia major patients who were definite $\beta$ - thalassaemia minors, were subjected to haematological analyses. It was found that their Hb $A_2$ values ranged from 3.4 to 7.3, their Hb F values ranged from 0.95 to 9.75, and their haemoglobin concentration ranged from 8.8 to 13.95. These values are comparable to the findings of other workers. 83% of the 60 cases examined could be considered to be clinically anaemic.

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