

VITAMIN A STATUS OF PREGNANT WOMEN LIVING
IN COLOMBO AND ITS SUBURBSSusith Jayasekera¹, T.M.S. Atukorala¹H.R. Seneviratne² and G.K.J. Silva¹¹ Dept. of Biochemistry² Dept. of Obstetrics and Gynaecology

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Eighty pregnant women in the age group 15 - 45 years living in Colombo or its suburbs were studied. The vitamin A and nutritional status were assessed in all subjects during the first trimester of pregnancy. The change in serum Vitamin A concentration was determined in 20 subjects during the last trimester of pregnancy. Their weight gain in pregnancy was also noted.

The monthly family income of 37 women was Rs.1,000/- or less, while 27 had incomes between Rs.1,000/- to Rs.2,000/- and 16 had incomes greater than Rs.2,000/-. Other Socio-economic parameters studied, included, occupation of the pregnant women and/or spouse and receipt of food stamps. The body weights of pregnant women in the lower income group were significantly lower than that of the other two groups.

The vitamin A concentration in the serum was measured by a fluorometric method¹. The concentration of β -carotene was also measured.

The women in the lower income group had significantly lower ($p < 0.05$) concentration of serum vitamin A compared to the other two groups. There was no significant difference in β -carotene concentration in the three groups.

A decrease in serum vitamin A concentration was observed in 11 out of 20 women in the third trimester of pregnancy.

These results suggest that lower serum vitamin A levels were associated with a lower family income.

Financial support from WHO is acknowledged.

Reference

1. Hansen, L.G. and Warwick, W.J. (1969) *Tech. Bull. Reg. Med. Tech.* 39 (3) 70.