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**Title**

**Iron deficiency anemia in children:** prevalence and prevention studies in Ribeirão Preto, Brazil.

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**Local Messages**

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**Abstract**

**Iron deficiency** and ferropenic **anemia** are, certainly, the most prevalent and specific nutritional problems in Brazil. The Ribeirão Preto region is no exception to it. A large prevalence of **iron deficiency/anemia** is found, mainly in the age group 6-24 months. In spite of the fact that several aspects of its physiopathology are known it is a very difficult problem to be solved. Many approaches and alternatives for their prevention have been tried but we are far from controlling the situation. Several studies carried out at the Medical School of Ribeirão Preto, University of São Paulo, Brazil have shown this high incidence of **iron deficiency** and **iron anemia** among infants and preschool **children**. The importance of **iron** supplementation to preterm, premature and normal infants was pointed out. The possibility of use of **iron** complexes to prevent **iron deficiency**, besides the usual ferrous sulfate, was shown. Several community studies proved the feasibility of distribution and intake of **iron** as supplements or fortification of carriers as alternatives to prevent **iron deficiency**.