

## II. Poor nutritional status and nutrition care for pregnant women

According to an Administrative Committee on Coordination Sub-Committee on Nutrition (ACC/SCN) report, stunting occurs after a long time of suffering from risk factors (accumulation), among which nutrition and health care of pregnant women plays the most important role. Nutrition care given to future mothers, particularly pregnant women, is actually the early care for children. The prevalence of chronic energy deficiency (BMI <18.5) among mothers with under-five children is now 22.9%<sup>1</sup>. The prevalence of iron deficiency anemia in pregnant women was between 35 - 40%; and over 30% of mothers had low Vitamin A concentration in breast milk, meanwhile the proportion of mothers given a high dose of Vitamin A after delivery was only 61%, and as low as 35.9% in Central Highland region<sup>2</sup>.

The nutritional status of mothers is closely related to that of young children, particularly infants. Many international and domestic studies have showed that maternal chronic energy deficiency, anemia and low weight gain during pregnancy are the main risk factors to the increase of prematurity/low birth weight rate (with weight at birth under 2,500 gr.) and neonatal and infant deaths. The diet of women, particularly pregnant women in many areas remain inadequate and unbalanced. In some areas, due to the food taboos during pregnancy, pregnant women have not been given a proper diet needed to ensure good development of their fetuses. Due to heavy workload, the women often have to work until the day of delivery. The proportion of pregnant women attending 2 - 3 antenatal care visits during the 3 trimesters is only 47.4% and there are 13.2% of the women having no antenatal care at all<sup>3</sup>. The fact that even the minimum number of ANC visits has not been taken means those women have not received adequate vaccination, iron supplementation and counseling on nutrition and pregnancy care. This indicates that nutrition and health care for women during pregnancy is still having problems that need to be addressed. Therefore, effective integrating activities are needed in order to improve nutritional and health status of mothers during pregnancy and lactating period, which indirectly influences the quality of IYCF.

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<sup>1</sup> The situation of maternal and child nutrition 1994 - 2004. NIN and GSO - 2005

<sup>2</sup> Data from the national nutrition surveillance, NIN, 2003

<sup>3</sup> Demographic and health survey. National Committee for Population, Family and Children. 2002