CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. Since it was a pilot project to test the feasibility of weekly iron tablet supplementation to the women of reproductive age of 15-44 years old working in the factory. The sampling method and size used in this study were based on the subjects' voluntary participation and the rules of the factory.

4.1 Discussion

4.1.1 As the factory is a productive system, time limitation was an issue whenever the data collection took place. Blood collection and both quantitative and qualitative data collection were carried out in a hurry and rapidly. This time limitation may affect the validity and reliability of the data collection and subsequent results.

4.1.2 As the cost of Serum Ferritin was expensive, the sample size of Serum Ferritin might be too small and may not be representative of the women in this factory.

4.1.3 As the factory had a high rate of employers' turn-over, this may affect the number of drop-out cases reported and may affect study outcomes.

4.1.4 As the end-products of this factory are produced by the women through machines, work productivity was difficult to measure.

4.1.5 The researcher had to bear in mind not to disturb the participants during their work hours.

4.1.6 A self-administered questionnaire was employed in this study. The returned baseline questionnaires were not satisfactory both in quantity and in quality (non- item response). It was difficult to follow up as the respondents were strictly on their work time. It was impossible to contact the participants during lunch and after work hours because they were busy and in a rush for their private activities and some of them rest after lunch.

4.1.7 Nutrition education in this study is still weak as the result shows some women did not concern on iron deficiency and its consequences. Some women stop taking weekly iron tablet because they felt that they had more appetite and their bodies require more food. They believed that iron tablets made them fat.

4.2 Conclusion

4.2.1 Blood analysis

The level of their serum ferritin and hemoglobin were decreased and some of their abnormal rbc changed to be normal.

4.2.2 IEC

IEC was very important component in this study to combat iron deficiency anemia besides iron supplementation.

4.2.3 Knowledge

Knowledge increased among the participants both on iron rich-food items and knowledge on control and prevention in iron deficiency anemia.

4.2.4 Practice

Even though the knowledge increased, the practices according to the knowledge scarcely changed.

4.2.5 Iron supplementation

Weekly iron supplementation in this study can prevent and control iron deficiency anemia.

4.2.6 Compliance

The majority of women took weekly iron tablets because they do believe in the "**change agents**".

4.2.7 Non-compliance

There were many reasons for non-compliance among the target women. Main reasons were they were wealthy, healthy, fear of obesity or forgot, travelling and adverse advise by physician.

4.2.8 Sustainability

Sustainability occurred when both the employers and employees felt the benefits of this weekly iron tablet supplementation and the tablets are at low cost.

The result shows the benefits among the women, They can tell that they are healthier and have less episodes of respiratory tract and gastrointestinal tract infections. They can feel the difference between the duration of taking the weekly iron tablets and during weekly iron tablet refusal. This was confirmed by the result of blood examination. The change agents were satisfied with this programme.

In conclusion, it is very important that key persons in workplace should advocate the benefits of weekly iron supplementation among women of reproductive age. Members of women of reproductive age are not only the change agents but also are the person to keep the programme going for sustainability. Last but not least, nutrition education among the target group should be considered important and expanded nationwide.