Reviewer's report

Title: Effect of Iron Content on the Tolerability of Prenatal Multivitamins in Pregnancy

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Reviewer: Nils Milman

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This is a well written paper evaluating a general problem in pregnant women—the (lack of) compliance to nutritional supplements which may or may not be caused by side-effects of the supplements. In general the paper should be shortened and more concise. Patients should be substituted with pregnant women.

The paper confirms the results of previous studies, which have shown that iron supplements to pregnant women in doses £100 mg elemental iron/day have no significant side effects compared to placebo (Kerr DNS, Davidson S. The prophylaxis of iron-deficiency anaemia in pregnancy. Lancet 1958; 272: 483-8.; Kerr DNS, Davidson S. Gastrointestinal intolerance to oral iron preparations. Lancet 1958; 272: 489-92.) A more recent study has shown that there is no significant difference between GI symptoms in women taking 20 or 80 mg elemental iron as fumarate and furthermore there are no significant differences in GI symptom scores in the period prior to supplementation compared with the period during supplementation (Milman N, et al. Side effects of oral iron prophylaxis in pregnancy myth or reality? Acta Haematologica 2006;115:53-7).

Introduction: Previous studies on this subject (see above) should briefly be mentioned.
The introduction should be shortened and focus on the aim of the study.

Results: Table 2b and 3b can be omitted. There should only be one Figure, I suggest Figure 1 is omitted. It should be clear from the text in Table 4 that the recorded data are obtained during supplementation.


The low compliance and consequently small series of women in the two groups is a considerable disadvantage to the study, but I will nevertheless recommend publication as the paper together with other papers on the same subject contributes to the explosion of the myth that iron supplements in low doses inevitably are associated with GI side effects.

Nils Milman, MD