Iron and vitamin D deficiency in children living in Western-Europe
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Citation for published version (APA):
Akkermans, M. D. (2017). Iron and vitamin D deficiency in children living in Western-Europe: Diagnostic tests, epidemiological aspects, and prevention

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Iron and vitamin D deficiency in children living in Western-Europe

1. The differentiation between absolute and functional iron deficiency can be made in the absence of acute infection/inflammation by the measurement of serum ferritin, red blood cell distribution width and/or zinc protoporphyrin/heme ratio (this thesis).

2. Red blood cell distribution width values seem to be affected by chronic (low grade) inflammatory processes leading to functional iron deficiency based on iron-restricted erythropoiesis (this thesis).

3. In Dutch moderately preterm infants, iron supplementation should be individualized on the basis of birth weight and ferritin levels in the first week of life (this thesis).

4. A mildly deprived iron status in Dutch pediatric diabetes mellitus type 1 patients is not associated with higher hemoglobin A1c levels (this thesis).

5. Micronutrient-fortified young child formula preserves the iron status and improves the vitamin D status of West-European toddlers (this thesis).

6. An adequate vitamin D status promotes an adequate iron status and vice versa and this explains why multi-micronutrient fortification strategies lead to more pronounced effects on iron status and hemoglobin levels of infants and young children compared to an iron single-fortification strategy (Eichler et al. BMC Public Health 2012 Jul 6;12:506).

7. Vitamin D is important for adequate functioning of our immune system, but there is no need for increasing the current standard-dose supplementation of 400 IU/day during wintertime since this will not reduce the prevalence of upper respiratory tract infections in young children in this period (Aglipay et al. JAMA 2017 Jul 18;318:245-254).

8. Malnutrition remains a key cause of mortality and poor health worldwide, with overfeeding instead of underfeeding being the biggest issue these days.

9. Stimulating children to play outside more will benefit both their (over)weight and their vitamin D status.

10. Healthy food remains an important key factor in the optimal development of a young child that requires knowledge and perseverance of parents/caretakers regarding offering a balanced diet to their children.

11. Most people say that it is the intellect which makes a great scientist. They are wrong; it is character (Albert Einstein).