Maternal iodine deficiency results in altered maternal and fetal thyroid hormone synthesis, which is proportional to the degree and duration of iodine deprivation (1). A recent meta-analysis demonstrated differences in the prevalence of iodine deficiency disorders in individuals from different age groups living in different regions of Brazil (2). Although data remain scarce in pregnant women, there is some indication that they could be at risk of iodine deficiency (3,4).

Because of high iodine intakes in children, the Brazilian National Health Surveillance (ANVISA) recently reduced the amount of iodine added to salt (5). We aimed to: (i) identify the availability of dietary supplements for pregnant women in Brazil; (ii) verify the amount of iodine present in these supplements; and (iii) correlate these levels with the new global recommendations of the American Thyroid Association (ATA) (1). We obtained nutritional information from available dietary supplements used by pregnant women and analyzed these data based on information on the package inserts using the federal agency (ANVISA) system of drug control and regulation, the ANVISA’s Electronic Label. In addition, we contacted the pharmaceutical companies responsible for each product and consulted the Brazilian Dictionary of Pharmaceutical Specialties (2015).

We identified 25 dietary supplements for pregnant women currently in use in Brazil. Forty-eight percent of these supplements contained no iodine (12/25 products), 16% (four products) contained 1–149 µg of iodine, and just nine products (36%) had the recommended amount of iodine (i.e. 150 µg) as recommended by the ATA, the European Thyroid Association (ETA), and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Despite a mandatory program of salt iodization in Brazil, recent studies have found that pregnant women may be at risk of iodine deficiency. On the other hand, fewer than half of dietary supplements commercially available and used by pregnant women in Brazil contain iodine in amounts recommended by international guidelines. Based on our findings, we propose that urgent measures are taken to protect both pregnant women and their offspring from the consequences associated with iodine deficiency.

References