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EVALUATION OF INTESTINAL PARASITOSIS, EOSINOPHILIA AND NUTRITIONAL STATUS IN RIVERSIDE INDIVIDUALS OF THE RECÔNCAVO OF BAHIA

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to evaluate the frequency of intestinal parasites in riverside dwellers and to associate them with nutritional status, presence of anemia and eosinophilia. Fecal and blood samples were collected from individuals from Santiago do Iguape, Cachoeira, and Cabaceiras do Paraguaçu, in the Recôncavo region of Bahia. Feces were examined using the Baermann, Lutz and Kato-Katz methods, and hemoglobin and eosinophil levels were assessed by blood count. Weight, height and abdominal circumference were used to assess nutritional status. Of the 267 participants, 194 (72.7%) delivered fecal samples, and of these, 80 (41.2%) were infected with intestinal parasites, with 73 (37.6%) positive for protozoa and 12 (6.2%) for helminths. The main protozoa diagnosed were *Endolimax nana* (24.7%), *Entamoeba coli* (21.6%), *Entamoeba histolytica/dispar* (9.8%) and *Giardia duodenalis* (1.6%). Among the helminths, there were identified *Schistosoma mansoni* (2.6%), *Enterobius vermicularis* (1.6%), *Ascaris lumbricoides* (1.0%), *Trichuris trichiura* (0.5%) and *Strongyloides stercoralis* (0.5%). The highest parasite loads were found in 3 of the 5 individuals infected with *S. mansoni*, with 1,776, 792 and 272 eggs/gram of feces, also presenting the highest rates of eosinophilia, 15%, 13% and 12%, respectively. No significant changes were observed in the hemoglobin levels of the studied population, regardless of the presence of parasites. Furthermore, between 80-90% of the individuals analyzed were considered eutrophic, and no association was found between parasitic infections and changes in the Body Mass Index. The occurrence of *Schistosoma mansoni* suggests contact of the population with transmission areas in the Paraguaçu River. On the other hand, access to treated water, even with occasional interruptions in the supply, in addition to the sewage system in some locations, must have influenced in the low frequency for other helminths observed.

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Keywords: Parasitic infections; riverside populations; eosinophilia.