

HEALTH EDUCATION FOR THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF TOXOPLASMOSIS IN VARIOUS ENVIRONMENTS

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Various parasitic zoonoses affect humans and can cause significant health issues. Among these diseases, toxoplasmosis, commonly referred to as "cat sickness," stands out. The objective of this project was to conduct a health education initiative aimed at disseminating accurate information regarding the prevention and control of toxoplasmosis. The project was implemented in the municipalities of Trindade and São Luís de Montes Belos, Goiás. A total of 22 primary schools, 5 secondary schools, and 7 institutions providing education for youth and adults were visited. In each setting, the language was adapted to ensure that the information could be more easily absorbed. In the case of children, a theatrical performance featuring actors dressed as cats and dogs was conducted to explain how to properly care for animals and improve personal and environmental hygiene conditions. For the presentations aimed at adolescents and adults, brochures and slides were the primary materials used, supplemented by social media posts that were shared with attendees. The initiative emphasized the use of simpler, more accessible language, always beginning with a discussion with students about their existing knowledge of toxoplasmosis. The topic consistently engaged the audience, as nearly everyone had some prior awareness of the disease and the associated risks of living with cats. However, many individuals still believed that the primary method of preventing the disease was to avoid contact with cats, remaining unaware of the key prophylactic measures that are more closely related to personal and environmental hygiene, as well as the proper consumption of animal-derived products. This project was significant for teaching ways to prevent toxoplasmosis, reinforcing appropriate measures, and dispelling unfounded information.

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