



PROMOTING HEALTH EDUCATION FOR STRATEGIC LEADERS IN THE EDUCATIONAL AREA OF ITUIUTABA, MINAS GERAIS

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Abstract

Parasitic diseases create an organic deficit that often results in comorbidities that limit development and quality of life, especially among children. Recognizing the role of health education in disseminating preventive knowledge, in August 2024, we conducted an educational update for 43 managers of public elementary schools in Ituiutaba, Minas Gerais, Brazil. The event included theoretical explanations of intestinal, tissue, and blood parasites, followed by viewing some of them under a microscope or stereomicroscope. Post-intervention knowledge gain was assessed via pre- (43 respondents) and post-event questionnaires (36 respondents), focusing on parasitic disease definitions, enteroparasitosis (prevention, diagnosis, and symptoms), and the indiscriminate use of antiparasitic drugs. When asked about prior events on parasitic diseases, 34.9% of participants reported never having attended any, and 48.8% participated years ago. Participants demonstrated improved knowledge post-event, correctly identifying parasitic diseases as caused by protozoa and worms (76.7% pre-event, 94.4% post-event correct response rates), recognizing enteroparasitosis prevention (79.1% pre-event and 94.4% post-event), diagnosis (95.3% pre-event and 94.4% post-event), and symptoms (51.2% pre-event and 80.6% post-event). When asked how often antiparasitic drugs should be taken and stool tests performed, 16.3% and 18.6%, answered correctly pre-event; 94.4% and 63.9% answered correctly post-event, respectively. This reveals that although participants were familiar with some aspects of enteroparasitosis, they had questions about their treatment and diagnosis. However, doubts about the frequency of stool tests remained after the event. Since the region has good environmental sanitation services, stool tests are recommended only when symptoms are present. These findings underscore the importance of ongoing training for these professionals, especially because they act as strategic leaders in their communities.

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