

DETERMINANTS OF DOG DEWORMING PRACTICES: INSIGHTS FROM A BRAZILIAN CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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Abstract

Zoonotic diseases can be caused by helminths that use dogs as definitive hosts, including parasites from the genera *Ancylostoma* and *Toxocara*. In this context, canine deworming is essential to safeguard both animal and human health. This study investigated factors associated with adherence to or non-adherence to deworming practices in a Brazilian municipality. A total of 501 dog guardians in Divinópolis, Minas Gerais, were randomly selected and interviewed in person. The questionnaire collected data on guardian's socioeconomic characteristics and their dogs' individual attributes. Bivariate chi-square tests were conducted to assess associations between these factors and deworming practices. The results revealed a significant positive association ($P < 0.05$) between deworming practices and higher education levels, female ownership, households with fewer than four inhabitants, residences with more than one bathroom, and ownership of a laptop. Conversely, non-adherence to deworming was significantly associated with the absence of a washing machine or car, failure to vaccinate dogs against rabies, and never taking dogs to a veterinarian. No significant associations were found for individual dog characteristics such as sex, breed, size, or age at acquisition (puppy or adult). Additionally, the presence of children in the household showed no correlation with deworming practices. These findings highlight the need for health education initiatives emphasizing basic dog care, particularly among socioeconomically vulnerable populations. Strengthening veterinary access and public awareness may also contribute to improved adherence to deworming protocols.

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