PARASITOLOGICAL SURVEY BASED ON DATA OBTAINED FROM A CLINICAL ANALYSIS LABORATORY IN SALVADOR-BA

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Intestinal parasitoses are diseases caused by etiological agents such as helminths and protozoa, which, at some stage of their biological cycle, inhabit the human digestive system and can cause pathological conditions. They represent a public health issue as they result from a lack of basic sanitation, inadequate education, misinformation regarding hygienic-sanitary practices, high population density, degrading environmental conditions, and the virulence capacity of parasites. Around 3.5 billion people worldwide are affected by enteroparasitoses, with children being the most affected group. In Brazil, it is estimated that 55.3% of all children are infected with enteroparasitoses. Therefore, it is evident that the study of parasitology aids in the prevention and treatment of parasitic diseases that can affect both humans and animals. Knowledge about different species, the number of existing infectious forms, the age, and the condition of the host provides essential information not only for combating the parasite or disease but also for prevention and understanding human health conditions. In this context, the present study determined the occurrence of gastrointestinal parasites based on the results of stool parasitological examinations of patients from a SUS-affiliated clinical analysis laboratory, Labimuno, located at the Institute of Health Sciences – ICS/UFBA, in Salvador-BA. The study correlated the findings with the variables of patient age and sex. The methodology consisted of analyzing spreadsheets using Microsoft Office Excel®, version 2019, constituting an analytical retrospective cross-sectional study of stool parasitological test results from human patients between May 2018 and October 2020. The study identified the occurrence of helminths and protozoa, as provided by Labimuno. The study was approved by the ICS/UFBA Research Ethics Committee, under protocol number 4268282. A total of 34,906 stool parasitological test results were analyzed, showing an enteroparasite occurrence of 13.3%, with protozoa predominating in 90% of cases. The most prevalent species were *Endolimax nana* (46%) and *Entamoeba coli* (35%), with lower occurrences of *Ascaris lumbricoides*, *Trichuris trichiura*, *Schistosoma mansoni*, *Strongyloides stercoralis*, hookworms, *Enterobius vermicularis*, and *Taenia* spp. The average patient age was 40.19 years. Women comprised 70.4% of the sample, with an average age of 41.14 years, while men had an average age of 34.94 years. The median age was higher for women (43 years) than for men (41 years). The male population had a higher proportion of normal results (60%) compared to the female population (57.2%). Among positive cases, women had a lower prevalence (12.3%), while men had a prevalence of 15.7%. Understanding the percentage of the parasitized population helps implement preventive and curative measures to reduce or mitigate the damage caused by endoparasitoses. Additionally, it ensures a valuable database that will contribute to the literature, which remains scarce on this subject. Finally, this study highlights the need for further research to expand the epidemiological and parasitological knowledge of enteroparasitoses in Salvador-BA, analyzing the various scenarios and specific characteristics of this municipality.

Keywords: helminths, protozoa, humans