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## Giardiasis Infections in Preschoolers: An Analysis of Daycare Centers in Teresina, Piauí

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### Abstract

Human infections caused by Giardia lamblia are common in children between the ages of two and five due to poor hygiene habits and ineffective immunity, with varied clinical manifestations: weight loss, diarrhea, epigastric pain and insomnia. The aim of this study was to survey the prevalence of giardiasis in preschoolers enrolled in public daycare centers in the municipality of Teresina, Piauí, Brazil, and to relate its epidemiological aspects and risk factors through serial coproparasitological examinations and a questionnaire applied to parents to find out about the socioeconomic and hygienic condition of each participant in the study. The research took place between 2014 and 2018. Initially, letters of consent from the schools were collected, along with the Free and Informed Consent Form. After this stage, fecal samples were collected from the students in containers with preservative (10% formaldehyde) and sent to the IFPI Parasitology Laboratory for analysis using the Hoffmann, Pons and Janer method. Of the 405 samples analyzed, 21.2% were positive for G. lamblia (86/405), 51.8% were negative (210/405) and 26.9% (109/405) were positive for other enteric parasites. Of the 86 children with giardiasis, 84.9% (73/86) were from families with an income of less than one minimum wage and 15.1% (13/86) had an income of more than one minimum wage. The highest prevalence was observed among children aged 5 to 6, 54.1% (46/86), and the lowest among those aged 3 to 4, 45.9% (40/86). Giardiasis had a high prevalence in the study participants, this infection can cause impairment in the physical and cognitive development of these children. Giardiasis was associated with risk factors such as low parental income and schooling, consumption of untreated water and poorly sanitized food. Ongoing health education programs, good hygiene habits and regular parasitological tests are effective strategies for combating this parasitosis.

### Supported by:

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