PARASITO2025
29º CONGRESSO BRASILEIRO DE PARASITOLOGIA

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL PROFILE OF INTESTINAL PARASITIC INFECTIONS IN A COMMUNITY ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TERESINA – PI

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Abstract

Intestinal Parasitic Infections (IPIs) are caused by protozoa or helminths and represent a public health problem, being associated with social vulnerabilities such as low income, poor sanitation and housing, as well as limited access to health and education. The main symptoms include irritability, abdominal pain, diarrhea, malnutrition and anemia. This study aimed to assess the prevalence of IPIs in a community on the outskirts of Teresina-PI. From January to December 2019, fecal samples from 178 participants were analyzed using the Hoffman, Pons & Janer method at the Parasitology Laboratory of the IFPI - Teresina Central Campus. Among the participants, 52.2% (93/178) were female and 48.8% (85/178) male, distributed in the following age groups: 2 to 9 years (24.7%), 10 to 19 years (23.6%), 20 to 59 years (47.8%) and ≥ 60 years (3.9%). Of the 178 samples analyzed, 44.2% (79/178) were positive only for protozoa. The prevalence was 39.8% (37/93) in females and 48.2% (41/85) in males. With regard to prevalence by age group, the highest rate occurred in children aged 2 to 9 years (52.3%), followed by those aged 10 to 19 years (45.2%), 20 to 59 years (41.7%) and ≥ 60 years (28.6%). The non-pathogenic protozoa identified were Endolimax nana (18.5%), Entamoeba coli (17.4%) and Iodamoeba butschlii (2.4%), while the pathogenic ones included Giardia lamblia (11.8%) and Balantidium coli (2.8%). The results of this study are similar to those of other studies carried out in Piauí and other Brazilian regions, and reinforce the need for effective IPI control strategies, extending them to protozoa, including improvements in access to drinking water, proper solid waste management and mass treatment with drugs, preceded by parasitological tests. In addition, health promotion actions can strengthen skills that encourage behavioral changes and the adoption of preventive measures.

Supported by:

Keywords: Intestinal Parasitic Infections. Protozoa. Public Health.