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PREVALENCE OF ENTERIC PROTOZOA IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN THE CITY OF TERESINA, PIAUÍ

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Abstract

Intestinal infections caused by protozoa are strongly associated with a lack of basic sanitation and environmental contamination by fecal waste. Thus, their prevalence is more common in regions of socio-environmental vulnerability, which are more frequent in developing countries. This study aimed to estimate the frequency and risk factors associated with enteric protozoan infections in preschoolers in the rural area of Teresina - Piauí, by means of parasitological stool tests and a questionnaire applied to parents to find out about the socioeconomic and hygiene conditions of each participant in the study. From January to December 2018, fecal samples were analyzed from 137 children aged between three and six years old, 54.7% (75/137) of whom were male and 45.3% (62/137) female. The samples were processed using the Hoffman, Pons & Janer methods at the Parasitology Laboratory of the IFPI - Teresina Central Campus. The overall prevalence of protozoa was 53.3% (73/137), with 62.7% (47/75) and 41.9% (26/62) positive for males and females, respectively. 60.3% (44/73) of those infected were polyparasitic. Giardia duodenalis and Entamoeba histolytica/díspar were the pathogenic protozoa found, with 19.7% (27/137) and 1.5% (4/137) of cases. The non-pathogenic protozoa were: Endolimax nana 48.2% (66/137), Iodamoeba butschlii 19% (26/137), Entamoeba coli 15.3% (21/137). Low income, schooling and open defecation were associated with these infections. The presence of animals in the household was associated with Giardia duodenalis infections. Giardiasis is the main intestinal parasitosis in preschoolers at the daycare centers studied. The high prevalence of non-pathogenic protozoa suggests fecal contamination of water and/or food, representing a serious risk to the health of this population, since these same vehicles can transmit pathogenic parasites.

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