

Prevalence and associated factors of soil-transmitted helminth infections among grade one students of selected government schools in Kandy municipal council area

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Soil-transmitted helminth (STH) infection is a common health problem particularly in young children and adolescents in Sri Lanka. Our aim was to determine the prevalence and associated factors of STH infections among grade one students of selected government schools in the Kandy Municipal Council area.

A cross-sectional survey using 502 students of grade one was carried out in seven randomly selected schools in the above area. A faecal sample was obtained from each student separately and examined microscopically using the concentration technique. A self-administered questionnaire was given to parents to evaluate the factors related to STH infections.

The overall prevalence of helminth infections was 2.4% out of which *Ascaris lumbricoides* was the commonest infection with a prevalence of 2.3%. Through the analysis of the data it was attempted to determine whether a correlation exists between STH positive group and the factors that were assessed through the questionnaire. Factors including the sex, source of drinking water, food sanitation and food handling methods, monthly income, educational level of parents and most recent antihelminthic treatment were investigated by the given questionnaire from which none of the assessed factors were proven to have a statistically significant correlation with STH infection after analyzing with the chi-square test.

From the results of the study, it is evident that the school-based national deworming program should be further strengthened.