

Incidence of Enterobiasis in Paediatric Patients and Their Guardians' Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices towards Prevention – A Descriptive Cross-Sectional Study in a Tertiary Care Centre, Batticaloa

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Enterobius vermicularis is a common parasite affecting about 200 million people worldwide. This study was done to investigate the current status of enterobiasis in paediatric patients (n=191) at the University unit of the Teaching Hospital Batticaloa and to assess their guardians' knowledge, attitude and practices in prevention of enterobiasis. Adhesive cellophane peri-anal swab preparations were used to collect parasitic samples and an interviewer administered detailed questionnaire to collect the information. The incidence of pinworm infection was 15.7% (n=30) where, 70.0% (n=21) were boys and the highest number of infected children (76.7%, n=23) were aged between 1-5 years. The mean knowledge score was 6.24±3.12 where 68.1% of them had good knowledge regarding prevention. The mean practice towards prevention was 5.4±3.11 where 16.7% of them had practiced adequate prevention techniques. The mean attitude was 4.7±3.12 where 76.4% of guardians showed positive attitudes towards prevention of infection. There were significant associations found with knowledge, attitude and practices where higher the knowledge better the practices and better the attitudes. Multivariate binary logistic regression was performed to identify the risk indicators. Out of the socio-demographic factors, only gender male (p=0.007), Family monthly income between 20,000–30,000 LKR (p=0.030) and the size of the family/ families with four members (p=0.021), were found to be significantly associated with enterobiasis. Knowledge (p=0.943) and attitude had no significant relationship with enterobiasis (p=0.061). However, knowledge, attitude, and practices were significantly associated with birth order (p=0.037), school (p=0.036) and the Guardian's level of education (p=0.053). Boys had a higher risk of infection, and further studies are required to assess the behavioral practices leading to the higher infection among them. As enterobiasis in the population is found to be multifactorial, reducing poverty and overcrowding (number of children per family) could be identified as the controlling measurements at least in the study population.

Keywords: *Enterobius Vermicularis*, Knowledge, Attitude, Practice, Enterobiasis.