LETTER TO EDITOR: RESPONSE

Review of patients with Strongyloides stercoralis infestation in a tertiary teaching hospital, Kelantan

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Dear Editor,

It is my pleasure to respond to the comments in ‘Strongyloides stercoralis: What can we forget?’

Two main issues have been raised. First, whether the data in our paper can reflect the nature of strongyloidiasis and what is the indication for stool examination for detection of Strongyloides stercoralis in this teaching hospital. Secondly, the issue of the exact root cause of anaemia and that the observed rate should be compared to that of general patients without strongyloidiasis in this setting.

With regards to the first issue, in our setting, stool examination for detection of Strongyloides stercoralis is not a routine test for immunocompromised patients. In addition, testing for stool ova & cyst was generally ordered by the clinician mainly based on diarrhoea (75%) and anaemia (50%) clinically. Stool for ova & cyst was generally requested to rule out secondary causes of anaemia, one of which is parasitic infection. The purpose of our study was mainly to provide local epidemiological data in our setting as it has not been previously well described.

I do agree with the comments pertaining to the root cause of anaemia. As the study was only a review of our positive cases with Strongyloides stercoralis, we did not look into this matter in our review. This is a good point which may be included in our future study in comparing to general patients without strongyloidiasis in order to look for any significant differences.

I am thankful for the valuable comments in improving and highlighting the issues that might be overlooked in strongyloidiasis.