LETTER TO EDITOR

Strongyloides stercoralis infestation: what can we forget?

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Dear Editor,

The recent report on Strongyloides stercoralis infestation is very interesting.1 Azira et al. reported that “The majority (92%) of cases, presented with intestinal symptoms and 50% with moderate to severe anaemia” and “Most patients were immunocompromised, with underlying diabetes mellitus, retroviral disease, lymphoma and steroid therapy.” There are many concerns on this retrospective review. First, it should be discussed whether the data can reflect the nature of Strongyloidiasis. The important problem is what the indication for stool examination for detection of Strongyloides stercoralis in this teaching hospital is. Generally, the stool examination is not routinely done. At present, the test is mainly used for immunocompromised patients presenting with intestinal symptoms (there might be bias in clinical practice). Hence, the high prevalence of intestinal symptoms and immunocompromised host might be due to this fact. Second, it is an interesting finding that there are many cases with moderate and severe anaemia. The exact root cause of anaemia is very interesting. At least, the observed rate should be compared to the general patients without strongyloidiasis in this setting. The high anaemia rate might be seen in an endemic area of hemoglobinopathy, which is a common hematological problem in Southeast Asia. In addition, if most cases are immunocompromised, some might get anaemia induced by disease and treatment. Nevertheless, the observation on the high rate of anaemia in the cases with strongyloidiasis is also reported in some previous reports such as the report from Taiwan.2

REFERENCES


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