



Editorial

Comments on Common Intestinal Parasites in Elderly People

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Intestinal parasites (IP) are one of the most significant causes of infections among the elderly in developing countries, especially in tropical areas. *Trichuris trichiura* and *Ancylostoma duodenale* infect near 2.3 billion people, especially in elderly in all around the world (1). Intestinal protozoan like *Giardia lamblia*, *Entamoeba histolytica* and *Cryptosporidium parvum* are widespread in old people too and in addition to this mentioned IP, *Ascaris lumbricoides*, *Taenia saginata*, *Enterobius vermicularis* and *Hymenolepis nana* are other most reported IP in them. IP repeatedly was reported among old people in whole the world because of their easily transmission ways and due to debilitation of old people's health system. A large number of affected elderly people by IP are living in nursing home and elderly care centers especially with poor sanitary and high population density highly prone to these contaminations. On the other hand, by looking at the elderly care centers in our country, unfortunately it seems that the some of them have poor sanitary conditions. In a study by Rasti et. al. to determine the prevalence of IP in elderly and handicapped people in a governmental nursing home in Kashan with 243 residents, 191 people (78.6%) were infected at least by one IP. A total of 11 types of IP was detected in this survey with *Blastocystis hominis* as a protozoan and *Strongyloides stercoralis* as a helminth highest prevalent IP in this center (2). Other developing countries also have a similar situation as our country. In a similar research by Shakya et. al. in rural areas of Nepal, from 235 elderly sampled people (41.7%) were infected by just one IP, and 30.6% had multiple parasitism (3). In general, physical problems and low personal hygiene along with dysfunction or malfunction of immune system, intestinal flora change, reduction of intestinal motility and finally achlorhydria make old people more prone to several infections cause by IP too. (4, 5).

Prevalence of IP in elderly people is mainly related to cultural and socioeconomic factors and after that, sanitation shortage. At first it seems necessary the observation of basic principles of hygiene. For example, a number of water-borne IP by providing

refined drinking water especially in rural areas and improving the quality of drinking water in urban areas, will be very effective on prevention and control of this infection. Health organizations must by providing the basic principles of hygiene in this regions, protect of elderly people health from common IP infections.

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