Parasitic zoonoses in Sri Lanka: an update

Both predicted and unexpected infections are being reported

Since the last publications on parasitic zoonoses in Sri Lanka (1) several cases of such infections that had been predicted have been published. It is the purpose of this review to summarise the new reports and to add newer information on this topic.

Protozoa

Several cases of locally transmitted cutaneous leishmaniasis have been recorded (2,3) and recently reviewed (4). No other new infections have been reported but a case of infection with the coccidian Cyclospora was seen in a foreign visitor about two years back. It is possible that cases of Cyclospora are missed as measurements of oocysts and sporulation are not routinely done.

Cestodes

Since 1993 (1) several cases of sparganosis caused probably by Spirometra sp. have been observed. (5,6 and Samarasinge S, personal communication). Bertiella studeri, an anoplocephalid tapeworm, is now recognised as a parasite acquired in areas where monkey reservoir hosts abound (7). As summarised by the present author (8) this cestode (Weerasooriya MV, Edirisinghe JS, personal communications), probably a spurious one, of Taenia taeniaeformis of the cat has recently been reported in a child (9).

Nematodes

Although a few cases of infection have been reported they are based only on serological tests and parasite larvae have not been seen in visceral larva migrans cases in Sri Lanka. A recent case of a child with hepatomegaly, high eosinophilia, raised ESR, and serologically positive for T. canis was most probably an example of this infection; but serial sections of liver biopsies failed to reveal any parasite (Weerasooriya MV, personal communication). In a field study of children in Hindagala, Kandy, a high infection rate has been observed, using a T canis specific ELISA technique (D Iddawela, personal communication).

A case of human infection of the vitreous of the eye caused by the cat hookworm, probably Ancylostoma tubaeforme, leading to loss of vision was also reported (10). The dog filarial worm Dirofilaria repens in now frequently seen in Sri Lanka and over 170 cases are on record (11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16). It is interesting to note that corresponding to population and surface area Sri Lanka has more cases than Italy which has a record of many more cases (11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16). It is interesting to note that corresponding to population and surface area Sri Lanka has more cases than Italy which has a record of many more cases (11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16). A filarial worm of animal origin that has been now recognised as a possible zoonotic parasite (1). It has now been reported as a parasite acquired in areas where monkey reservoir hosts abound (7). As summarised by the present author (8) this cestode (Weerasooriya MV, Edirisinghe JS, personal communications), probably a spurious one, of Taenia taeniaeformis of the cat has recently been reported in a child (9).

References


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