

Giardiasis and Amebiasis in Southern Iran

Ahwaz, the capital city of the state of Khuzestan in the south of Iran, has its water supply from the river Karun which is highly polluted with sewage and industrial waste. The climate is warm and humid, suitable for the survival and spread of protozoal infections (1-3). A survey on prevalence of amebiasis and giardiasis was, therefore, undertaken amongst 1500 children, aged between infancy and 6 years, in 15 kindergartens. Three stool samples were obtained in 753 children. *E. histolytica* was isolated in 7.8% and *G. lamblia* in 45.2%.

For giardiasis, children were treated with either furazolidone (5 mg/kg/day) or metronidazole (30 mg/kg/day) or both. Therapy for amebiasis comprised either paramomycin (30 mg/kg/day) or metronidazole or both, the duration of treatment was 7 days. Stool examinations were repeated 10 days after completion of therapy.

The cure rates for giardiasis for furazolidone (n=68), metronidazole (n=36) and both drugs (n=12) were 71%, 89% and 100%, respectively. The corresponding

figures for amebiasis for paramomycin (n=17), metronidazole (n=16) and both drugs (n=10) were 89%, 69% and 100%, respectively. Protozoal infections are still a major health problem particularly in developing and under-developed countries (4). Low socioeconomic standards, inadequate health education, high humidity and polluted water supply help in the survival and spread of protozoal infestation. The two main causes of persisting manifestations in Ahwaz city are water supply from river Karun and the high temperature of 40-50°C in summer months with 15-95% humidity.

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