

Impact Assessment of Vesicular Schistosomiasis on Educational Performance of Primary School Pupils in Niger Delta

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ABSTRACT: Sign of gross haematuria, no doubt imposes great psychological stress on affected persons. Infected persons were more depressed and would like to shy away from the public. Uninfected pupils showed slightly but definite better scholastic performance, assessed by their school attendances and grades scored in the previous school year. The infected pupils, contrary to previous studies Ejezie and Ade- Serruno (1981) and Ekanem et al (1994) were thought hampered by the disease, necessitating more studies in the endemic areas.

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INTRODUCTION

There has been slow progress in documentation of impact of schistosomiasis on human activities in endemic area of Niger Delta which is attributable to some logistic reasons and unwillingness for human subjects to co-operate with field investigators especially if the exercise has no immediate benefit.

But there is need for more research efforts in these aspects of community-based information needed for intervention programmes, especially among young people. The information supplied here is from the author's Ph.D thesis.

Material and Methods

A total of 1936 primary school pupils, who were enrolled from 1994/1995 academic year, were randomly selected and examined for vesicular schistosomiasis infection (**Onyirioha and Arene 1994**). The school attendance and academic records (the grade scored in the previous school year) for the pupils were obtained from their class teachers. Then the mean of the grades scored and school attendance of infected pupils and uninfected pupils were compared.

Results

The calculated mean scholastic performances of infected and uninfected pupils are shown in Table 1. The uninfected pupils showed better mean scholastic performance (61.80%) than

infected pupils (58.97). The mean school attendance of infected pupils and uninfected pupils were 81.98% and 84.74% respectively.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The finding of present study indicates that urinary schistosomiasis is possibly derogatory to the scholastic activities and learning of the infected primary pupils in the study area, with 81.98% and 84.74% overall mean school attendance of infected and uninfected pupils, respectively.

The mean marks scored in the previous school year for non – infected pupils were better than the infected ones, though the differences were statistically insignificant ($P>0.001$ and $P>0.05$ respectively). The findings agreed with many authors, (**Bell et al 1972** in Zimbabwe and **Kamura et al 1992** in Kenya), who reported that schistosomiasis has an impact on the school performances of infected pupils.

Similar studies by **Lonveridge et al (1948)**; **Walker et al (1970)** in South Africa, **Goldin and Barday (1972)** in Zambia and **Ekenam et al(1970)** in Nigeria, said that Schistosomiasis has no impact on School performances. But the present report suggests that children are actually disturbed though no cerebral cases have been found, but psychological stress is equally important and any stressful condition on the part of learning can lower the standard sufficiently and is not to be neglected.

Table 1: Distribution of Indices of Scholastic Performance among Schistosoma Infected and Uninfected Primary School Pupils in 4 rural communities, Niger Delta.

ITEMS	MEAN ATTENDANCE AND MARKS SCORED IN PREVIOUS SCHOOL YEARS OF PUPILS WHOSE RECORDS WERE EXAMINED					
	MALES		FEMALES		BOTH SEXES	
	INFECTED	NON-INFECTED	INFECTED	NON-INFECTED	INFECTED	NON-INFECTED
MAXIMUM ATTENDANCE PER PUPILS PREVIOUS SCHOOL YEAR	175	175	175	175	175	175
MEAN ATTENDANCE PREVIOUS SCHOOL YEAR	144.17	150.12	142.50	146.46	143.34	148.29
MEAN % ATTENDANCE	82.38	85.78	81.43	83.69	81.91	84.74
MEAN MARK % SCORED IN PREVIOUS SCHOOL YEAR	60.35	63.36	57.59	60.24	58.97	61.80

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