

Soil Transmitted Disease: Helminths.

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Accepted May 22, 2021

Commentary

Soil-Transmitted Helminths (STHs) are a major group of infectious pathogens that are responsible for a number of critical worldwide health issues. Roundworms (*Ascaris lumbricoides*), whipworms (*Trichuris trichiura*), and hookworms are the most common STHs. Around the world, 804 million individuals are afflicted with roundworms, 477 million with whipworms, and 472 million with hookworms, according to estimates. These parasites are spread by human faeces containing eggs contaminating the soil, and are then acquired through ingestion or skin penetration, as in the case of hookworm larvae. As a result, they primarily affect children in low-income communities with poor sanitation and hygiene or insufficient access to safe and clean water. At least one species of this group of infections has infected over a billion people worldwide. The global approach for preventing soil-transmitted helminthiasis is based on

- Frequent anthelmintic treatment
- Health education
- Sanitation and personal hygiene
- Other preventative measures such as vaccines and remote sensing

The arguments for developing a control approach based on population intervention rather than individual therapy are examined, as are the costs of preventing STHs, which cannot always be assessed due to the difficulty of measuring interventions in health education. An effective sanitation infrastructure can help a country's economic development by reducing STH morbidity and eliminating the root cause of most poverty-related diseases.

Transmission

Geohelminths are more common in children who live in filthy environments, and their impact on morbidity and death is greater in malnourished people. The soil-transmitted helminths survive for years in the human gastrointestinal tract as adult worms. The roundworm *A. lumbricoides* infects the entire small intestine. Adult hookworms of the *Necator* and *Ancylostoma* genera parasitize the upper section of the human small intestine, whereas adult *T. trichiura* (whipworms) dwell in the large intestine, notably in the cecum. STHs come in a variety of sizes, with females being larger than males. The dynamic mechanisms involved in STH transmission (free-living infective stages of development and survival) are dependent on the current environmental conditions; climate is a key factor of STH infection transmission, with appropriate moisture and warmth required for larval growth in the soil.

Anthelminthic and massive treatment

In areas where infections are highly transmitted, disease control resources are limited, and sanitation funding is insufficient, regular drug treatment is the primary method of infection control. Alternative approaches to drug treatment in the community include: The treatment is offered to the entire community, regardless of age, infection status, or any other social characteristics (universal treatment) the treatment is targeted at population groups, which may be defined by age, sex, or other social characteristics, regardless of infection status; and the treatment is targeted at population groups, which may be defined by age, sex or other social characteristics, irrespective of infection status (targeted treatment). Based on the examination of existing epidemiological data, the distribution approach and treatment frequency are chosen.

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