

SEROPREVALANCE OF TOXOPLASMOSIS AND RISK FACTORS OF TOXOPLASMA GONDII INFECTION AMONG PREGNANT WOMEN IN SRI LANKA

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Toxoplasma gondii is an intracellular protozoan infecting humans and animals. Infection in adults commonly causes mild disease but greater importance lies in preventing transplacental transmission which may result in major foetal anomalies and is vital to identify infection in pregnancy. Research on this regard in Sri Lanka is scarce and would be beneficial in developing antenatal care strategies for improved foetal outcome. A random sample of 534 pregnant women attending antenatal care in Teaching Hospital Peradeniya from 2010 to 2013 was recruited for this study. Blood samples were tested for *Toxoplasma gondii* IgG and IgM antibodies from the participants by using a commercial ELISA kit with a cut-off OD value of >1 and a structured questionnaire was used to identify the exposure to risk. Among the participants 159 (29.8%) were positive for *T. gondii*

IgG antibodies and none were IgM positive. The seroprevalance in the first, second and third trimesters were 30.4%, 30.6% and 26.1% respectively. Of the risk factors studied, preparation and selling raw meat ($p=0.05$) and household gardening ($p=0.01$) were significant whereas the presence of domesticated cats and dogs, eating locally produced meat or dairy products did not show significant associations. Seroprevalance of *T. gondii* present among pregnant women attending antenatal care in Peradeniya was 29.8% indicating high level of transmission among the study population. However 70.2% of the study population were seronegative and were susceptible to primary acute infection during pregnancy and possible foetal anomalies. Therefore implementing health education especially on the aforementioned risk factors is recommended.

Biography

Dr. Sanura Vithana completed his primary and secondary education at the prestigious Trinity College Kandy and obtained his MBBS from the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka in 2017. He currently works in the Department of Parasitology in the same institution as a Temporary Lecturer. His academic interests are clinical medicine and surgery, tropical medicine and toxicology.

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