

Parasites in Malaysian children with cancer.

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Abstract:

In this prospective study, we examined stool specimens from children with cancer receiving chemotherapy who were admitted for fever to the Universiti Sains Malaysia Hospital in Kota Baru, Kelantan. Stool specimens were examined for ova and cysts of parasites. Over a period of 15 months, there were 129 febrile episodes in 50 children with cancer and, in all, 237 stool specimens were examined. Sixty-six per cent of febrile episodes were associated with neutropenia and 9 per cent were associated with diarrhoea. Stool parasites were found in 42 per cent of children. The most common were helminths, followed by protozoa. *Trichuris trichiura* was the most common parasite (24 per cent), followed by *Ascaris lumbricoides* (22 per cent). Hookworm was found in 2 per cent. *Giardia lamblia* was found in 6 per cent of children, *Blastocystis hominis* in 4 per cent, and *Cryptosporidium parvum* in 2 per cent.