Global health: Dracunculiasis

Students Name

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Dracunculiasis, commonly known as Guinea worm disease, is a painful and weak disease. As international public health initiatives are highly valued, low-cost and practical interventions have been adopted in targeted areas, and the disease is on the verge of being eliminated. It is an infection caused by the Guinea worm. It can cause pain, skin irritation, ulcers and weakness in arthritis. Drinking water containing small insects that are infected by the worm can cause disease. Guinea worm is the real insect. It is a large nematode (roundworm) that enters the body by drinking contaminated water.

Infected persons usually suffer from a lot of pain trying to relieve it by submerging the infected portion in water, and if it is dipped in an open water source, such as a pond or a well, the nematode emits a large number of larvae which develops there and is infectious after two weeks. When people drink this water, the larvae enter human bodies and penetrate the intestinal walls. The blisters are formed in a year, and up to one-meter long adult, worm can emerge. (Muller, 1979).

Nematodes cause the debilitating and painful infections, usually starting with blisters on the legs. When blistering occurs, the patient can experience fever, itching, severe pain, burning sensation, and swelling. Dracunculiasis was widespread in many African and Asian countries in the early 20th century. But now, only Chad, Ethiopia, and South Sudan still have this disease epidemics out of all the countries (Hopkins & Withers, 2002). By 2016, only 25 cases in the world were reported by WHO.

At present, there is no effective anthelminthic drug treatment or vaccine. The traditional technique of extracting the worm by rolling it on a stick continues to be the most effective form of treatment. Surgery can be useful, although only when the worm is near the surface of the skin, and is complemented by the topical application of antibiotics to prevent infection. The tetanus vaccine is usually administered to avoid wound complications.

References

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