Original Research Article

Pathological and Therapeutic Association between Enterobiasis and Certain Perianal Problems

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A B S T R A C T

Enterobiasis is the commonest intestinal helminthic disease and is long believed to be a simple illness with no important local or systemic invasive complications. A cross-sectional analytic study of 175 patients attending the surgical clinics with complaints of perianal lesions like perianal fissure, perianal fistula, perianal abscess and perianal pruritus and excoriation. Forty two (93%) of the patients in the first group had a low serum zinc (mean 7.27umol/l), this was significantly lower than the second group and the two control groups (patients with uncomplicated Enterobiasis and a normal control group), however, the mean serum level was lower than normal in these groups. After treatment of the first group with two doses of Mebendazole (100mg) at two weeks interval, 8 patients (18%) had complete cure of their perianal pathology (two anterior perianal fissure and eight pruritus and excoriation), 10 patients (22%) had a moderate response and 13 patients (29%) had a mild response. Out of 175 patients, 45 patients had enterobiasis on twice scotch tape tests. There were 34 (76%) males and 11(24%) female positive cases of enterobiasis. Perianal fissure was the most common lesion in both groups: 30 (67%) in the first group versus 96 (75%) in the second group. Perianal pruritus with excoriation occurred in 14 cases (31%) in the first group and 16(12%) in the second. Perianal fistula and perianal abscess occurred in 5(11%) and 3(6%) in the first group and in 26(20%) and 24(18%) in the second group respectively.

Keywords
Enterobiasis, Perianal Lesions, Perianal Pruritus.

Introduction

Enterobiasis, the commonest intestinal helminthic disease, is long believed to be a simple illness with no important local or systemic invasive complications (Weller et al., 2001; Haslett et al., 2005). Studies in the past have reported the occurrence of more severe form of the illness (Locas et al., 2003). In the recent past studies have documented the invasive problems related to this parasite alone or in association with other parasitic diseases (Olivares et al., 2004). Granuloma of liver, peritoneum, and perianal area have been reported by several investigators (Herrstrom et al., 2001; Craig et
al., 2005). Adult Enterobias worm can be found in a pulmonary granuloma (Rosalia et al., 2003). Direct relation with specific perianal conditions like fistula in ano and perianal fissure is not well documented, though reports of anal and perianal granulomas are increasing with accentuation of severity of these conditions by enterobiasis.

Interestingly, malabsorptive states are related to several types of intestinal parasitosis, leading to certain deficiencies of nutrients, minerals and vitamins. For a long time it was believed that enterobiasis is not associated with any of these medical problems. Olivares et al., (2005) have found decreased levels of serum copper, zinc, magnesium and serum vitamin B12 and folate in enterobias infected children.

**Materials and Methods**

This study has been conducted at Al-Sader Teaching Hospital in Al-Najaf on 175 patients attending the surgery clinics with complaints of perianal problems. The type of the perianal lesions included in the study was perianal fissure, perianal fistula, perianal abscess, perianal pruritus and excoriation.

Four groups of patients were tested for serum zinc. First group: 44 patients with perianal problems and enterobiasis; Second group: 44 patients with perianal problems without enterobiasis; Third group: 15 patients with uncomplicated enterobiasis; Fourth group: 15 age matched normal controls.

Each patient was evaluated for enterobiasis, if he had history of observing the worm or positive scotch tape test. Serum zinc assessment was done by using atomic absorption (Schimatzo Corp., AA-6200) applying the equation: Conc. (umol/L) = conc. × Diluting factor (10). Every patient with enterobiasis was given 100 mg of mebendazole once daily, and the dose was repeated after two weeks; reexamined after one month of treatment for assessment of his perianal lesion. Some of the patients were also given antibiotic treatment on evidence of secondary bacterial infection.

The patients were divided into three groups according to the response of treatment: First group: Those who had a complete cure after treatment. Second group: Those who had moderate improvement. Third group: Those who had mild improvement.

A descriptive data was given as a mean ± standard deviation (SD). The chi-square test and ANOVA LSD test was applied for statistical analysis at level of significance <=0.05. SPSS version 10 was used for statistical analysis.

**Results and Discussion**

Forty five patients (26%) were found to have enterobiasis and 134 (74%) had no evidence of enterobiasis.

Perianal fissure was the most common lesion in both the groups, i.e., with enterobiasis and without enterobiasis. 30 patients (58%) and 96 (59%) had perianal fissure in both the groups respectively. Perianal fistula was the second commonest lesion, seen in 5(10%) and 26 (16%) patients respectively. Perianal abscess was seen in 3 patients with enterobiasis (6%) and 24 patients (15%) without enterobiasis.

Perianal pruritus with excoriation was reported in 14 (26%) and 16(10%) patients respectively (Table 1). Most of the cases of fissure and pruritis with excoriation was seen below 15 years of age (Table 2).

In patient having perianal disease with and without enterobiasis, perianal pain was the
most frequent symptom 42 cases (93%) and 128 (98%) respectively (Table 3). Forty
two patients (93%) with enterobiasis and perianal diseases had a mean serum level of
7.3umol/l. Thirty five patients (80%) with perianal diseases without enterobiasis had a
mean serum zinc level of 10.32umol/l. Thirteen out of 15(86%) patients with
enterobiasis and no perianal disease had a mean serum level of 9.9 umol/l. The control
group had a mildly decreased serum levels with a mean serum level of 11.4umol/l
(Table 4). The mean serum level of patients with enterobiasis was significantly lower
than the other three groups (p value < 0.05).

Ten patients (22%) had a moderate response to treatment, 13 patients (29%) had a mild
response and 14 patients (31%) had no response at all.

Enterobiasis or pinworm disease had been labeled for a long time as an innocent
infection devoid of any important complications owing to its inability for
tissue invasion or its inability for causing histological or biochemical derangement.
Against this fact several researches and reports, including several case studies had
stressed the implication of pinworm disease in important pathological sequels (Rosalia et
al., 2003; Olivares et al., 2004).

Tissue invasion and inflammatory reaction of the host result in different pathological
sequels, granuloma being the most frequent, recorded in different tissues including
appendix, liver, rectum and perianal area. However, despite the high prevalence of
enterobiasis and the common occurrence of perianal problems, including specific
problems like perianal fissure and fistula, there are no serious and important studies to
correlate between these two problems.

Table 1: Types of Perianal lesions in patients with Enterobiasis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of perianal lesions</th>
<th>Patients with enterobiasis (%)</th>
<th>Patients without enterobiasis (%)</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fissure</td>
<td>30 (58%)</td>
<td>96 (59%)</td>
<td>&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fistula</td>
<td>5 (10%)</td>
<td>26 (16%)</td>
<td>&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abscess</td>
<td>3 (6%)</td>
<td>24 (15%)</td>
<td>&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pruritus with excoriation</td>
<td>14 (26%)</td>
<td>16 (10%)</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Distribution of Perianal lesions with enterobiasis according to age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perianal lesions</th>
<th>Number of Cases (%)</th>
<th>Age group (years)</th>
<th>&lt;15 yrs No (%)</th>
<th>15-24 yrs No (%)</th>
<th>25-34 yrs No (%)</th>
<th>35-45 yrs No (%)</th>
<th>&gt;45 yrs No (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fissure</td>
<td>30 (100)</td>
<td>12 (40)</td>
<td>8 (27)</td>
<td>6 (20)</td>
<td>2 (7)</td>
<td>2 (7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fistula</td>
<td>5 (100)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 (20)</td>
<td>2 (40)</td>
<td>1 (20)</td>
<td>1 (20)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abscess</td>
<td>3 (100)</td>
<td>1 (33)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 (67)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pruritus &amp; excoriation</td>
<td>14 (100)</td>
<td>5 (36)</td>
<td>4 (29)</td>
<td>2 (14.2)</td>
<td>2 (14.2)</td>
<td>1 (7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52 (100)</td>
<td>18 (35)</td>
<td>13 (25)</td>
<td>12 (23)</td>
<td>5 (10)</td>
<td>4 (8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table.3 Symptoms of patients having perianal lesion with and without enterobiasis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Patients with enterobiasis (%)(Total No:45)</th>
<th>Patients without enterobiasis (%)(Total No:130)</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perianal pain</td>
<td>42 (93%)</td>
<td>128 (98%)</td>
<td>&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itching</td>
<td>30 (67%)</td>
<td>40 (31%)</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bleeding</td>
<td>27 (60%)</td>
<td>120 (92%)</td>
<td>&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discharge</td>
<td>28 (62%)</td>
<td>104 (80%)</td>
<td>&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constipation</td>
<td>15 (33%)</td>
<td>60 (46%)</td>
<td>&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diarrhea</td>
<td>10 (22%)</td>
<td>30 (23%)</td>
<td>&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdominal distension</td>
<td>4 (9%)</td>
<td>12 (9%)</td>
<td>&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table.4 Serum zinc levels in the four groups of patients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patients group</th>
<th>No of patients</th>
<th>Mean serum zinc (umo/l)</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First group: Patients with perianal disease and enterobiasis</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second group: Patients with perianal disease and no enterobiasis</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>2.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third group: Patients with enterobiasis only</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth group: Control group (Healthy individuals)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>118</strong></td>
<td><strong>9.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.59</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In our study, enterobiasis was found in a significant fraction of patients attending the surgical clinics due to different types of perianal problems. Many cannot be attributed primarily to enterobiasis but there is a possible association between anterior anal fissure and enterobiasis as this lesion occurs only in patients with enterobiasis associated with enterobiasis. Also this is an expected finding as nocturnal itching is very frequent in enterobiasis.

Rosalia et al., reported a case of perianal mass in a six year old girl, attributed to penetration of the skin by eggs with focal granulomatous reaction in the squamous epithelium. Worms penetration of tissues is recorded in places where scratching and secondary infection doesn’t occur like intestinal mucosa and female genitourinary stem (Brown et al., 2002). Our study clearly shows the role of enterobiasis in the presentation and symptomatology of perianal problems as there is a high incidence of pruritus and excoriation attributed to enterobiasis but there is a possible association between anterior anal fissure and enterobiasis as this lesion occurs only in patients with enterobiasis associated with enterobiasis.

The association between enterobiasis and biochemical derangement is of more interest. Olivares et al., reported iron deficiency to be associated with enterobiasis. Zinc is an important trace element, deficiency of which was underestimated in the near past. In our study a trial of assessment of zinc status in a group of patients with enterobiasis and perianal problem revealed a clear evidence of decreased serum zinc in this group of

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patients as compared to controls, a finding is consistent with Brown et al., We are of the impression that the impact of the local perianal pathology with subsequent inflammatory reaction and systemic upset (psychological and physical) may help in accentuation of the state of zinc deficiency in patients with perianal disease.

Eight out of 45 patients had a complete cure, 10 had moderate improvement and 13 had mild improvement on medical treatment including antihelminthic drugs. Thirteen patients with perianal abscess and granuloma were treated with pyrantel with local and systemic antibiotics with complete cure. This strengthens our idea that despite the fact that enterobiasis is an innocent infection and not blamed to be the primary cause of most of the perianal lesions, it is still beneficial to check for this parasite and to treat it to ameliorate the patient’s symptoms especially itching, discharge and pain.

References


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