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Popular Article

Tapeworm Tango: The Dance of Taeniasis

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What is taeniasis?

Taeniasis is an infection caused by the tapeworm (*Taenia solium*, *T. saginata*, and *T. asiatica*.) Parasites are small organisms that attached to living things to survive. The living things the parasites attach to are called host. Parasites found in contaminated food and water. If we consumed contaminated water or food may be chances of being infected with taeniasis.

Etiology

The cestodes *Taenia solium*, *T. saginata*, and *T. asiatica* are main cause of taeniasis. The definitive host of taeniae is man, in whose small intestine the adult stage lodges, and natural intermediate hosts of *T. solium* are the domestic pig and the wild boar.

Geographic Distribution

Both *T. solium* and *T. saginata* are distributed worldwide. *T. solium* is commonly found in developing countries like Latin America, Eastern Europe, northern China, India, and eastern Africa. *T. saginata* found particularly in Africa, North and South America, and Europe. (Fan et al., 1990a; Fan et al., 1990b).

Risk factor

According to CDC nearly 1000 people of USA got infected by taeniasis due to travel to areas where taeniasis is more common. Taeniasis is more common in people whose immune system is lower due to disease condition like HIV, AIDS, Diabetes, Chemotherapy.

Transmission

Eating raw or undercooked beef or pork is main cause of getting taeniasis infection to the



human. Humans can also become infected with *T. solium* eggs due to poor hygiene (via the fecal-oral route).

Symptoms

Taeniasis causes mild and non-specific symptoms. Headaches, dizziness, seizures, dementia, hypertension, lesions in brain, blindness, tumor like growths, hydrocephalus, paraplegy, meningitis.

Diagnosis

- Diagnosis of taeniasis is mainly using stool sample by identifying the eggs.
- Ziehl-Neelsen stain used for diagnosis.
- Molecular diagnosis by PCR
- Serological test like ELISA

Prevention

Prevent, control by proper public health interventions with veterinary, human health and environmental sectors are required. Active surveillance system should enable new cases of human or porcine cysticercosis to be recorded.

Treatment of human taeniasis:

- Good hygiene in public area with proper sanitization
- Avoid open defecation
- Community health programme by extension activity
- Intervention in pigs including vaccination and deworming programme
- No free roaming of pig in community area and public places
- Improve meat and pork inspection
- Quality control for pork and meat must be maintained

Treatment

Taeniasis is treated with medications prescribed by doctor. Medications for the treatment of taeniasis include praziquantel and albendazole.

Both drugs are antihelmintics, that they kill parasitic worms and their eggs. Commonly, these medicines are provided in a single dose. They can take a few weeks to clear taeniasis infection. The tapeworm will be excreted as waste. Common side effects associated with dizziness and upset stomach.

References

<https://www.healthline.com/health/taeniasis#diagnosis>

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%20tapeworm%20may%20include%20cysticercosis.

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