

Prevalence and Intensity of Urinary *Schistosoma Haematobium* Eggs Among the School Aged Children in Kona Ward, Ardo Kola Lga, Taraba State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to examine the prevalence and intensity of urinary Schistosomiasis haematobium in two Kona ward settlement of Ardo kola local government, area of Taraba State, Nigeria. The study employed urine filtration technique using polycarbonate membrane filters to detect *Schistosoma haematobium* eggs in urine. Standard culture techniques to isolate urinary tract pathogens with their susceptibility patterns were carried out. Questionnaires were administered to collect information on socio-demographic data on the children. A total of 1153 urine samples were collected and analysed for the eggs of *Schistosoma haematobium*, out of 675 children infected with urinary schistosomiasis, the highest occurrence of bacteriuria (61.3%) was recorded in the heavy intensity (>50 eggs/10ml urine) while low intensity (1 – 50 eggs/10ml urine) recorded the lowest occurrence of bacteriuria (59.2%). Chi square analysis showed significant association between intensity and bacteriuria ($\chi^2 = 309.5$, $p = 0.000$). Spearman's correlation coefficient for bacteriuria also showed significant relationship between urinary schistosomiasis and bacteriuria ($r = 0.518$, $p < 0.001$). The percentage occurrence of *E. coli* in heavy ova intensity (>50 eggs/10ml urine) is slightly higher (56.9%) than in light intensity

(55.0%). Occurrence of *Klebsiella spp* in heavy intensity is slightly above (24.9%) that of light intensity (24.4%). *P aeruginosa* and *Proteus spp* occur more in light intensity (24.9%) and (28.9%) respectively than in heavy intensity (14.2%) and (14.6%) respectively. Occurrence of *S. aureus* is significantly higher in heavy intensity (4.2%) than in light intensity (1.7%). In subjects negative for urinary schistosomiasis, occurrence of bacteria isolates follows similar pattern with *Klebsiella spp* occurring more (3.3%) than the other isolates. These findings indicate that the areas are endemic to urinary schistosomiasis and therefore prompt intervention in the study areas is needed.

Keywords: prevalence, intensity, *Schistosoma haematobium*, school aged children, kona ward, Ardo kola, Taraba State, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Schistosomiasis is a chronic and debilitating disease caused by digenetic Trematode flatworms (flukes) of the genus *Schistosoma* (Noble & Glem, 1982). It is one of the most common parasitic infections in the world (Gracio et al., 1992), ranking second to only malaria in terms of its socio-economic and public health importance in tropical and

subtropical areas (Ogbe, 2002). It is also the most prevalent of the waterborne diseases and one of the greatest risks to health in rural areas of developing countries (Ogbe, 2002). Infection occurs through contact with water infested with the free swimming larval stages of parasitic worms (cercariae) that penetrate the skin and develop in the human body to maturity. Parasite eggs leave the human body with urine or excreta. They hatch in freshwater and infect the appropriate aquatic snail intermediate hosts. *Bulinus* snails are intermediate host for *S. haematobium* (Ukoli, 1984). Within the snails they develop into cercariae, which are, in turn, released into the water to infect new human hosts. Transmission can take place in almost any type of habitat from large lakes or rivers to small seasonal ponds or streams (WHO, 2002).

In urinary Schistosomiasis, the worms live in the blood vessels of the bladder. Only about a half of the eggs are excreted in the urine. The rest stay in the body, damaging other vital organs. It is the eggs and not the worm itself which cause damage to the intestines, the bladder and other organs (Banerjee & Agrawal, 1992).

The disease occurs in 74 countries in Africa, South America and Asia, with an estimated 200 million people infected, 85 percent live in sub-Saharan Africa, and at least 600 million are at risk of infection (WHO, 1993). Recent estimates from sub-Saharan Africa indicate that 280,000 deaths per year can be attributed to Schistosomiasis (van der Werf et al., 2003).

In Nigeria, Schistosomiasis due to *S. haematobium* is widespread, constituting a public health problem particularly in children (Sulyman et al., 2009 Fana et al., 2009 & Akinboye et al., 2011). The distribution of the disease is focal, aggregated and usually related to water resources and development schemes such as irrigation projects, rice/fish farming and dams. It occurs in all the states of the federation, with a high infection rate among school children (Mafe et al., 2000; Okpala et al., 2004).

There are reports of Bilharziasis in Zamfara State (Adamu et al., 2001; Ladan et al., 2011), but none in Abarma village in Gusau Local Government Area of Zamfara State, Nigeria, where the inhabitants that predominantly farmers, traders and civil servants rely on one river for their daily water needs. This study is design to investigate the prevalence and intensity of urinary Schistosomiasis among the inhabitants of Abarma village. It is our hope that findings from this study will inform control managers on the status of the infection in the study area

The children at great risk of kidney damage are infants and young children with febrile urinary tract infection in whom the infection is effective (Kunin 1972, 1979). The incident of primary infection is greatly influenced by age and sex and by predisposing factors that impair the defence mechanism that maintains the sterility of the normal urinary tract. Infection in children is often hard to recognize because of the variable symptomology and the difficulty of obtaining suitable specimens of urine in the very young, but they are of particular importance as causes of permanent damage to the developing kidney (Obi *et al*, 1996). Pyuria is evidenced by the inflammation of the genitourinary tract; it is a common problem with asymptomatic bacteria (Linshaw *et al*, 1996). Urinary Tract Infection of both bacteria and parasitic origins has been associated with high incidence of squamous cell of bladder and cervix carcinoma (Shortliffe, 1995).

Statement of the Problem

Urinary schistosomiasis is a neglected common parasitic disease of children and no attempt has been made in recent past to report the secondary urinary pathogen that could be associated with the disease among school-aged children in rural Nigeria.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study area

The study was carried out in Murbai and Sobai settlements of Kona ward in Ardo-kola LGA which is located in the central part of Taraba State. Ardo-kola LGA is bounded by Jalingo LGA to the North and Gassol LGA to the south and Yorro LGA to the East. Some areas in the local government depend on slow running water, streams and ponds for drinking and daily chores. The main tribes in the Local Government Area are Kona, Mumuye, Fulani and Jukun. The main occupation of the people in the area is farming while very few are involved in trading and civil service.

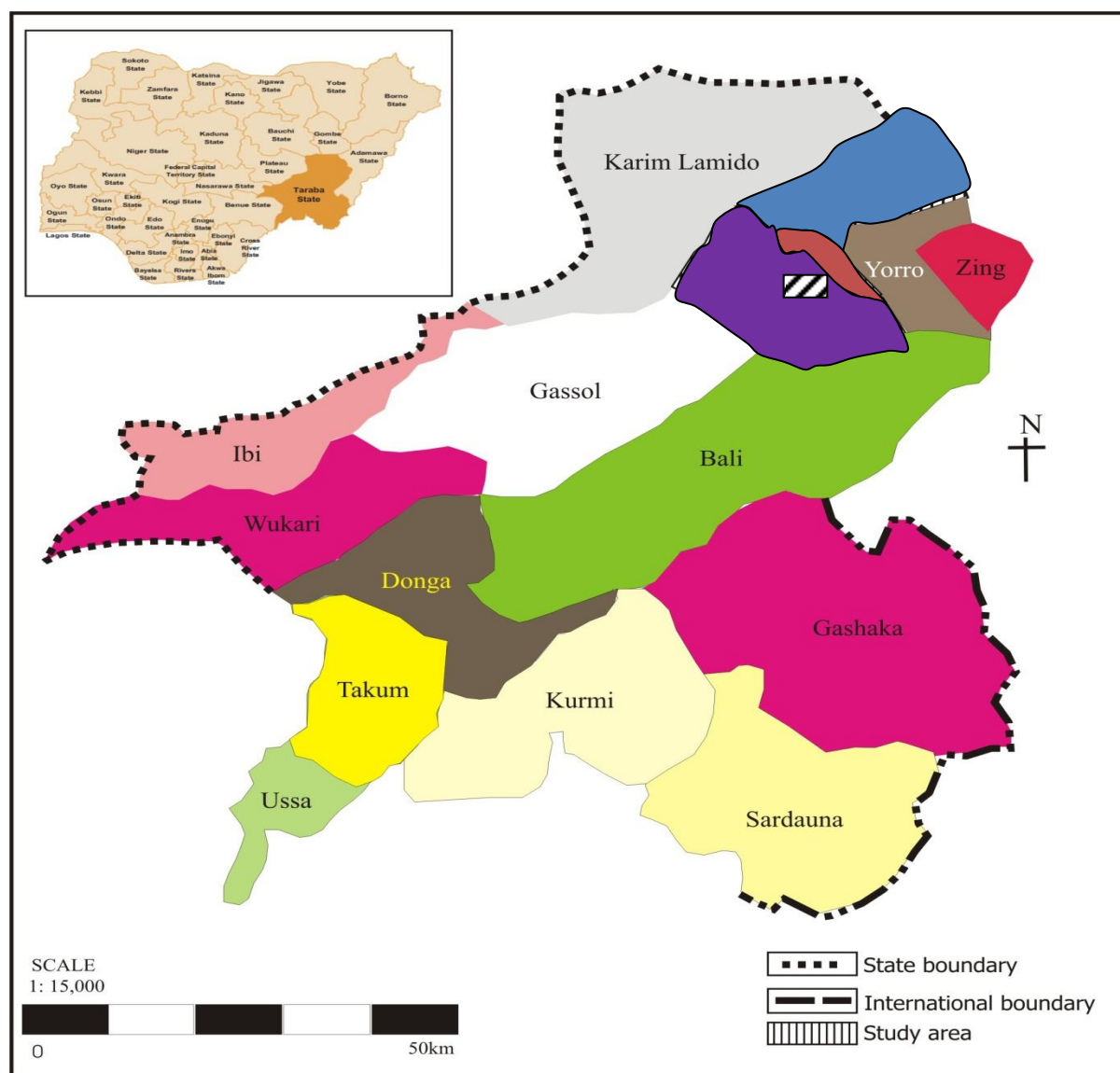


Fig 1: Map of Taraba State showing the study area
Source: Taraba State Ministry of Land and Survey, 2023.

Study Design

This is a cross sectional study carried out among school aged children at Sorbai and Murbai in Kana ward of Ardo kola local government, Taraba State, North-East, Nigeria. All school aged children who consented were screened for the study.

Sample collection

Consent for this study was obtained from the village head, healthcare center, and also willing participants.

Sterile universal plastic containers with screw caps that bore identification numbers were given to the children. The children between the ages of 2-16 years were informed on urine sample collection instruction that is, the mid-stream urine. The samples were collected between 10.00am and 2:00pm, because timing for urine collection was critical especially for the detection of *Schistosomiasis haematobium* (WHO, 1980; Cheesbrough, 2005).

A total of 1153 urine sample were collected, 675 positive samples with urinary schistosomiasis were examined for bacteriuria using standard culture method described by Cheesbrough (2005).

Urine Filtration Technique

Polycarbonate membrane filter of 13mm diameter and 12 - 14 μ m pore size was used according to the method described by Cheesbrough (2005). The polycarbonate membrane filter stained with lugols iodine was placed on a microscope slide and examined under the 10x and 40x objective lens. The number of eggs of *S. haematobium* were counted and expressed as eggs/10ml of urine. Intensity was reported as the number of ova per 10mls of urine and categorized as light intensity of infection (1-50 ova/mls) and heavy (>50 ova/10mls) of urine were found. The presence of pyuria (white blood cells) and red blood cells were also noted.

Data Analysis

Data obtained was entered in Microsoft excel and exported to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 for data analysis. The relationship between the prevalence and intensity of the disease and various parameters obtained from this study was analysed. Chi-square test was used to compare bacteriuria occurrence between the settlements, age and sexes, of the *Schistosoma haematobium* infected school aged children. Spearman rho's correlation analysis was also used to determine relationship between the intensity of the disease and the prevalence of bacteria.

RESULTS

Occurrence of bacteriuria in relation to intensity of urinary schistosomiasis infected school-aged children in two Kona settlements, Ardo-kola LGA, Taraba State, Nigeria.

This describes the occurrence of bacteriuria in relation to intensity of urinary schistosomiasis infected school-aged.

Out of 675 children infected with urinary schistosomiasis, the highest occurrence of bacteriuria (61.3%) was recorded in the heavy intensity (>50 eggs/10ml urine) while low intensity (1-50 eggs/10ml urine) recorded the lowest occurrence of bacteriuria (59.2%). Chi square analysis showed significant association between intensity and bacteriuria ($\chi^2 = 309.5$, $p = 0.000$). Spearman's correlation coefficient for bacteriuria also showed significant relationship between urinary schistosomiasis and bacteriuria ($r = 0.518$, $p < 0.001$)

Table 1: Occurrence of bacteriuria in relation to intensity of urinary schistosomiasis infected school-aged children in two Kona settlements, Ardo-kola LGA, Taraba State, Nigeria.

Bacteriuria (%)			
Intensity eggs/10mls	Negative	Positive	total
1-50	172 (40.8)	250 (59.2)	422
>50	98 (38.7)	155 (61.3)	253
Total	270 (40.0)	405 (60.0)	675

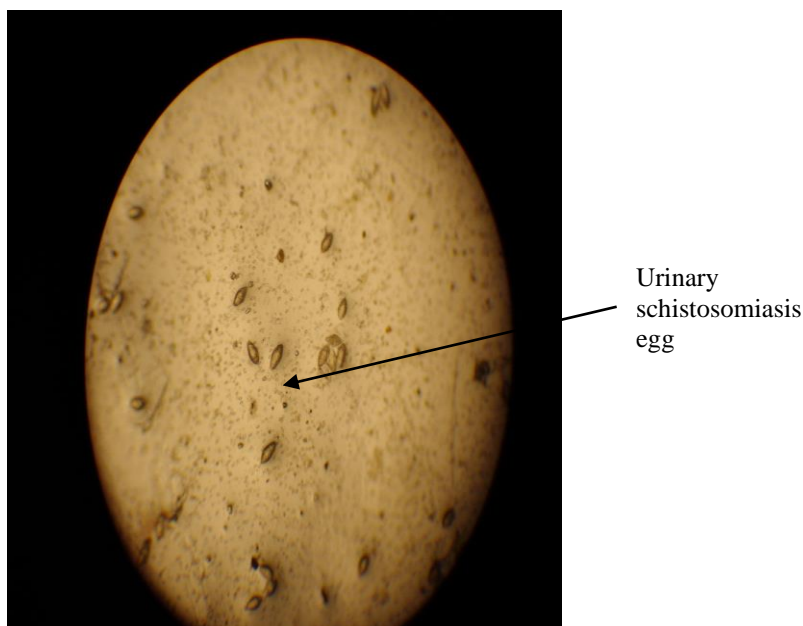


Plate 7: Light intensity of *Schistosoma haematobium* (1 – 50 eggs/10ml urine)

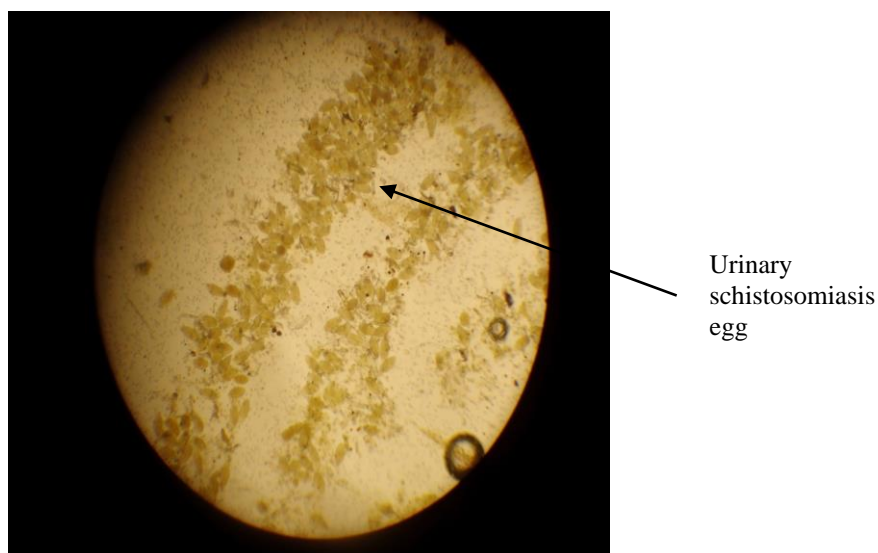


Plate 8: Heavy intensity of *Schistosoma haematobium* (>50 eggs/10ml urine)

Occurrence of different bacteria isolates in relation to intensity of urinary schistosomiasis infected school-aged children in two Kona settlements.

This summarizes the occurrence of each of the bacteria isolates in relation to ova intensity.

The percentage occurrence of *E. coli* in heavy ova intensity (>50 eggs/10ml urine) is slightly higher (56.9%) than in light intensity (55.0%). Occurrence of *Klebsiella spp* in heavy intensity is slightly above

(24.9%) that of light intensity (24.4%). *P aeruginosa* and *Proteus spp* occur more in light intensity (24.9%) and (28.9%) respectively than in heavy intensity (14.2%) and (14.6%) respectively. Occurrence of *S. aureus* is significantly higher in heavy intensity (4.2%) than in light intensity (1.7%). In subjects negative for urinary schistosomiasis, occurrence of bacteria isolates follows similar pattern with *Klebsiella spp* occurring more (3.3%) than the other isolates.

Table 2: Percentage occurrence of different bacteria isolates in relation to intensity of urinary schistosomiasis infected school-aged children in two Kona settlements, Ardo-kola LGA, Taraba state, Nigeria

Bacteriuria (%)					
Intensity of <i>S. haematobium</i> eggs/10ml urine	<i>E. coli</i>	<i>S. aureus</i>	<i>P. aeruginosa</i>	<i>Klebsiella spp</i>	<i>Proteus spp</i>
Negative	15 (3.1)	4 (0.8)	7 (1.5)	16 (3.3)	8 (1.7)
1 – 50	232 (55.0)	17 (1.7)	105 (24.9)	103 (24.2)	122 (28.9)
> 50	144 (56.9)	12 (4.2)	36 (14.2)	63 (24.9)	37 (14.6)
Total	391 (33.9)	23 (2.0)	148 (12.8)	182 (15.8)	167 (14.5)

Occurrence of bacteria in *Schistosoma haematobium* infected school-aged children according to age in two Kona settlements, Ardo-kola LGA, Taraba state, Nigeria.

The occurrence of bacteriuria in *Schistosoma haematobium* infected school-aged children in relation to age is described in table 8. Bacteriuria is shown to occur more in 1 – 5 years age group, percentage occurrence follows this pattern: *E. coli* (84.1%), *P. aeruginosa* (60.3%), *Proteus spp* (52.4%), *Klebsiella spp* (30.2%), while *S. aureus* occurs less in 1 – 5 years (i.e.

1.6%) but high in 6 – 10 years age group (3.0%). The 11 – 15 years age group recorded the lowest percentage occurrence of all the bacteria isolates: *E. coli* (49.4%), *Klebsiella spp* (22.7%), *Proteus spp* (14.8%), and *P. aeruginosa* (14.2%). In children negative for urinary schistosomiasis, the occurrence of bacteriuria was also recorded with *Klebsiella spp* having the highest occurrence of (3.3%) followed by *E.coli* (3.1%), *Proteus spp* (1.7%), *P.aeruginosa* (1.5%) and *S.aureus* (0.8%).

Table 3: Occurrence of bacteria in *Schistosoma haematobium* infected school-aged children according to age in two Kona settlements, Ardo-kola LGA, Taraba state, Nigeria.

Bacteriuria (%)					
	<i>E. coli</i>	<i>S. aureus</i>	<i>P. aeruginosa</i>	<i>Klebsiella spp</i>	<i>Proteus spp</i>
By Age					
Negative	15 (3.1)	4 (0.8)	7 (1.5)	16 (3.3)	8 (1.7)
1 – 5	53 (84.1)	1 (1.6)	38 (60.0)	19 (30.2)	33 (52.4)
6 – 10	236 (54.1)	13 (3.0)	78 (17.9)	107 (24.5)	100 (22.9)
11 – 15	87 (49.4)	5 (2.0)	25 (14.2)	40 (22.7)	26 (14.8)
By Sex:					
Negative	15 (3.1)	4 (0.8)	7 (1.5)	16 (3.3)	8 (1.7)
Male	151 (34.0)	19 (4.3)	56 (12.6)	49 (11.0)	65 (15.1)
Female	225 (97.4)	0 (0.0)	85 (36.8)	117 (50.6)	92 (39.8)

DISCUSSION

According to the findings of this study, 675 children out of 1153 were infected with urinary schistosomiasis, the highest occurrence of bacteriuria (61.3%) was recorded in the heavy intensity (>50 eggs/10ml urine) while low intensity (1 – 50 eggs/10ml urine) recorded the lowest occurrence of bacteriuria (59.2%). Chi square analysis showed significant association between intensity and bacteriuria ($\chi^2 = 309.5, p = 0.000$). Spearman’s correlation coefficient for bacteriuria also showed significant relationship between urinary schistosomiasis and bacteriuria ($r = 0.518, p < 0.001$). The occurrence of bacteriuria in this study (60.0%) is higher than 48.3%

reported among school children infected with urinary schistosomiasis in a rural settlement of Ngbo-West in Eastern Nigeria (Uneke et al, 2009) but lower than (80.3%) reported among children infected with urinary schistosomiasis in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja , Nigeria (Ifeanyi et al, 2009) The bacteriuria occurrence levels among schistosomiasis infected children is also similar to findings reported in Egypt among school children where bacteriuria was 10 times higher in areas endemic for urinary schistosomiasis (Laughlin et al, 1979). This high rate of concomitant bacteriuria among school-aged children could be attributed to urinary schistosomiasis.

The study also revealed that the percentage occurrence of *E. coli* in heavy ova intensity (>50 eggs/10ml urine) is slightly higher (56.9%) than in light intensity (55.0%). Occurrence of *Klebsiella spp* in heavy intensity is slightly above (24.9%) that of light intensity (24.4%). *P aeruginosa* and *Proteus spp* occur more in light intensity (24.9%) and (28.9%) respectively than in heavy intensity (14.2%) and (14.6%) respectively. Occurrence of *S. aureus* is significantly higher in heavy intensity (4.2%) than in light intensity (1.7%). In subjects negative for urinary schistosomiasis, occurrence of bacteria isolates follows similar pattern with *Klebsiella spp* occurring more (3.3%) than the other isolates. This study showed that all 675 subjects positive for urinary schistosomiasis, had pyuria (pus cells). This finding is suggestive of inflammatory lesions of the bladder caused by *Schistosoma haematobium*, the eggs deposition in the tissue could give rise to inflammation and granules formation leading to subsequent urinary tract infections. Earlier on, some researchers had implicated pyuria with bacterial infection (Bhatt et al, 1984, Adeyeba and Ojeaga, 2002 and Ifeanyi et al, 2009).

The report that *E.coli* is the most frequently encountered urinary tract pathogen is a confirmation of this study where it has 33.9% occurrence followed by *Klebsiella sp* (15.8%), *Proteus sp* (14.5%), *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (12.8%) and *S.aureus* (2.0%). All children with the primary infection of urinary schistosomiasis had more than one bacterium. When the mucosa is broken, which happens with urinary schistosomiasis, the urinary tract becomes an easy target for invading bacteria. The outcome is manifested in later years since most of the subjects examined had asymptomatic bacteriuria and did not present symptom such as painful micturition. This development poses great danger to the health of the school children (Fincharm et al, 2003). In the two settlements studied, the people depend more on traditional medicine

which is more or less ineffective in the treatment of urinary schistosomiasis and its associated bacteriuria co-infection because there is virtually no existing health centres and trained community health care personnel in these settlements, thus systemic knowledge about bacteria co-infection and schistosomiasis in the 2-15years age group is scanty which is understandable since methods for schistosomiasis surveys are not optimal for detecting bacteriuria (Fincharm et al, 2003)

All the organisms encountered during the course of this study were resistant to Amoxicillin, Augumentin, Cotrimoxazole and Tetracycline. *E. coli* in particular showed a high level of resistance to Amoxicillin and Gentamycin. Similar results were reported by Galia et al (2003), Mordy and Erah (2006), Frank-Peterside and Wokoma (2009) and Ayoade, (2013). Gentamycin, Ofloxacin and Nitrofurantoin were found to be the most effective for all the bacteria isolates except *S.aureus* that recorded 40% susceptibility. Chloramphenicol was found to be the most effective for *S. aureus* (100% susceptibility).

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study shows that 675 children out of 1153 were infected with urinary schistosomiasis, the highest occurrence of bacteriuria (61.3%) was recorded in the heavy intensity (>50 eggs/10ml urine) while low intensity (1 – 50 eggs/10ml urine) recorded the lowest occurrence of bacteriuria (59.2%).

This study revealed that there is high occurrence of bacteriuria among school-aged children with urinary schistosomiasis in Sorbai and Murbai settlements of Ardo-kola LGA, Taraba State, Nigeria. Infection rate was highest in the 1-5years old than other age groups, and more in males than females, intensity of *Schistosoma haematobium* greatly influences the occurrence of bacteriuria in school-aged children. Urinary tract pathogen implicated is *E. coli*, *Klebsiella sp*, *Pseudomonas*

aeruginosa, Proteus sp and S. aureus which is due to unhygienic practices engaged in by the children. Therefore, there is need for Ardo kola local government Chairman and Taraba State Government to educate the inhabitants of the study area on urinary schistosomiasis and other related diseases and to mount successful control interventions in the areas affected.

Recommendations

The present study recommends that:

- There should be improvement in basic infrastructures such as potable water in rural communities, building of suitable health centres and adequate toilet facilities.
- Periodic epidemiological studies will help in identifying the important UTI pathogen associated with urinary schistosomiasis with a view to developing an effective and proper treatment model.
- All children infected with urinary schistosomiasis should be screened for bacteriuria and appropriate antibiotics concurrently administered along with Praziquantel.
- Intensive and sustained public health awareness and education programmes be carried out to sensitize the people on the risk of urinary schistosomiasis and its co-infection with bacteriuria.

Declaration by Authors

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