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Association between Consumption of Geophagic Substance and Helminthic Infection among Pregnant Women, in Kisii County, Kenya

Association Entre la Consommation de Substances Géophagiques et l'Infection Helminthique chez les Femmes Enceintes du Comté de Kisii, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: Soil-transmitted helminths constitutes the commonest of human parasitic infections worldwide. Millions of pregnant women who consume geophagic substances across the globe are predisposed to adverse maternal and prenatal outcomes including risk of helminthic infections. The association between type of geophagic substances consumed and helminthic infections among pregnant women in Kisii County is not documented.

OBJECTIVE: This study endeavoured to determine the association between geophagic substances and helminth infections among pregnant women in Kisii County, Kenya.

METHODS: This was a cross-sectional descriptive study, where 183 pregnant women were recruited by purposive sampling. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data on the socio-demographic characteristics and the geophagic substances consumed. Their stool samples were examined microscopically by direct saline method and further confirmed using Formal-ether concentration technique to identify intestinal helminths species.

RESULTS: Simple logistic regression and odds ratio (OR) was used to analyze data. Results showed that there was a significant association between geophagy practice and contraction of helminthic infections ($p=0.015$). Notably, there was a significant positive association between ant hill soil consumption and contraction of helminth infections ($OR=2.67$, $p=0.050$).

CONCLUSION: Consumption of anthill soil by pregnant women has significant association with contraction of helminthic infections. Public health awareness on the increased risk of contracting helminthic infections due to anti hill soil consumption by pregnant women is recommended. **WAJM 2022; 39(6): 557–562.**

Keywords: Geophagy, intestinal helminthes, socio-demographic factors, geophagic substances.

RÉSUMÉ

CONTEXTE: Les helminthes transmis par le sol constituent la plus courante des infections parasitaires humaines dans le monde. Des millions de femmes enceintes qui consomment des substances géophagiques dans le monde sont prédisposées à des résultats maternels et prénataux défavorables, y compris le risque d'infections helminthiques. L'association entre le type de substances géophagiques consommées et les infections helminthiques chez les femmes enceintes du comté de Kisii n'est pas documentée.

OBJECTIF: Cette étude visait à déterminer l'association entre les substances géophagiques et les infections helminthiques chez les femmes enceintes du comté de Kisii, au Kenya.

MÉTHODES: Il s'agit d'une étude descriptive transversale, dans laquelle 183 femmes enceintes ont été recrutées par échantillonnage raisonné. Un questionnaire semi-structuré a été utilisé pour recueillir des données sur les caractéristiques socio-démographiques et les substances géophagiques consommées. Leurs échantillons de selles ont été examinés au microscope par la méthode saline directe et confirmés par la technique de concentration de Formal-ether pour identifier les espèces d'helminthes intestinaux.

RÉSULTATS: La régression logistique simple et l'odds ratio (OR) ont été utilisés pour analyser les données. Les résultats ont montré qu'il existait une association significative entre la pratique de la géophagie et la contraction d'infections helminthiques ($p=0,015$). Notamment, il y avait une association positive significative entre la consommation de terre de fourmilière et la contraction d'infections helminthiques ($OR=2,67$, $p=0,050$).

CONCLUSION: La consommation de terre de fourmilière par les femmes enceintes a une association significative avec la contraction d'infections helminthiques. La sensibilisation de la santé publique sur le risque accru de contracter des infections helminthiques en raison de la consommation de terre de fourmilière par les femmes enceintes est recommandée. **WAJM 2022; 39(6): 557–562.**

Mots clés: Géophagie, helminthes intestinaux, facteurs socio-démographiques, substances géophagiques.