The Prevalence of Intestinal Parasites in Tribal Parts of Khuzestan Province

Parasitic diseases are among the most important worldwide health problems, especially in developing countries. We have scant information about the epidemiology of intestinal parasites in tribal regions of (south of Iran), Khuzestan Province. So, we conducted this study to determine the prevalence of intestinal parasites in this part of our country.

In a cross-sectional study, using a cluster random sampling, 15 clusters were studied. Fifteen villages of southwest and 13 of northeast regions of Khuzestan Province were selected at random. In each village (tribal region) 20 – 25 families were selected (a total of 50 individuals in each village). A total of 1,494 individuals (789 males and 705 females) with different ages were studied for intestinal parasitic infestation by using the formalin-ether deposit method on all stool samples and direct spreading method for those with diarrhea. Fresh stool samples were collected and sent to the laboratory on the same day.

Age of the participants ranged from six months to 100 years. The participation ratio was 40.4%. Of the participants, 379 (25.4%) were infested with at least one type of intestinal parasites (pathogenic/non-pathogenic protozoa/helminth). Three hundred and twenty-two (21.6%) participants were infested with intestinal protozoa and 57 (3.8%) participants with intestinal helminths. The most common intestinal protozoa were *Giardia lamblia* (10.9%), *Entamoeba coli* (9.4%), and *Blastocystis hominis* (2.4%). The most common intestinal helminths were *Hymenolepis nana* (2.5%), *Strongyloides stercoralis* (0.6%), and *Trichostrongylus species* (0.5%).

The tribal parts of Khuzestan Province have a poor health status. There is an increase in the prevalence of giardiasis. Furthermore, significant differences existed in the prevalence rates of infestation with intestinal parasites between the two studied areas.

**Authors:** Mowlavi GR, Mir-Ahmadi H, Rezaeian M, Beigom-Kia E, Ebrahimi-Daryani N, Rokni MB, et al.


Endocrine Disorders in Thalassemia Major

Thalassemia major is a genetic disorder, in which blood transfusion is critical for the survival of patients. During the last three decades, hypertransfusion therapy has significantly increased the life expectancy and quality of life in such patients. However, this type of treatment has also increased the frequency of complications due to iron overload. Today, endocrine abnormalities are far more common than before in patients with beta-thalassemia. The aim of this study was to evaluate the prevalence of endocrine disturbances in patients with thalassemia major.

Fifty-six patients, aged over 10 years, with thalassemia major were enrolled. Demographic data, history of treatment, as well as menstrual history in females were collected. The patients were examined to determine their pubertal status and standard deviation score (SDS) of height for evaluation of short stature. For evaluation of glucose tolerance, fasting blood glucose, and oral glucose tolerance tests were performed. Serum levels of calcium, phosphorus, thyroid stimulating hormone, free thyroxin, luteinizing hormone, follicular stimulating hormone, and estradiol (in girls), and testosterone (in boys) were measured.

Fifty-six patients aged 10 – 27 years with thalassemia major were evaluated. In this study, the prevalence of diabetes mellitus, impaired fasting glucose, and impaired glucose tolerance test were 8.9%, 28.6%, and 7.1 %, respectively. Short stature (SDS ≤ -2) was detected in 70% of boys and 73% of girls. Hypocalcemia and primary overt hypothyroidism were present in 41% and 16%, respectively while 14.3% did not have any endocrine abnormalities.

Despite recent treatment with Desferal® in beta-thalassemia major, the risk of secondary endocrine dysfunction remains high, with hypogonadism being one of the most frequent endocrine complications.
Endocrine evaluation in patients with thalassemia major must be carried out regularly especially in those patients over the age of 10 years.


**Source:** Iranian Journal of Endocrinology and Metabolism. 2008; 10 (1): 35 – 44.

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**The Prevalence of Amblyopia in School Children in Mashhad**

The aim of this study was to determine the prevalence of amblyopia and its determinants among students in Mashhad City (north of Iran).

Using randomized cluster sampling, 2510 students were selected to undergo ophthalmologic examinations. Amblyopia was defined as corrected visual acuity of 8/10 or less in either eye.

Of the 2,510 students, 2,150 were examined (85.6% participation rate). The prevalence of amblyopia was 1.9% (95% confidence interval, 0.94 to 2.9) including 2.1% in female and 1.7% in male students ($P=0.620$). Amblyopia was detected in right eye in 31.7%, in left eye in 41.5%, and in both eyes in 26.8%. About 66% of students with amblyopia had refractive errors.

In conclusion; the prevalence of amblyopia in students in Mashhad is comparable to that of other parts of the country. Refractive error is a significant risk factor for occurring amblyopia.

**Authors:** Ostadi Moghaddam H, Fotouhi A, KhabazKhoob M, Heravian J, Yekta A, Javaherforoushzadeh A.


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**Scorpions Fauna in Kerman Province, Iran**

The current study was performed during 2005 to 2006 in order to determine scorpions’ species in Kerman Province, Iran.

In this descriptive study, 13 cities in Kerman province were investigated. All collected scorpion specimens in %75 ethylalcohol were sent to the entomology laboratory affiliated to Kerman University of Medical Sciences for identification of their species by the use of stereo microscope and morphologic identification key.

A total of eight species belonged to the three families of Buthidae, Hemiscorpiidae (Liochelidae), and Scorpionidae. The identified species were as follows:

A: Family Buthidae: *Mesobuthus eupeus* (44%), *Androctonus crassicauda* (28.5%), *Odontobuthus dorai* (22.6%), *Orthochilins scrobiculosus* (3%), *Androctonus. amorci* (0.35%), and *Buthotus saulcyi* (0.35%).

B: Family Liochelidae: *Hemiscorpious lepturus* (0.9%).

C: Family Scorpionidae: *Nebo sp* (0.3%).

Kerman Province with eight scorpion species has a high biological fauna.

**Authors:** Dehghani R, Moabed Sh, Kamyabi F, Haghdooost AA, Mashayekhi M, Soltani H.


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**Smoking Behavior Based on Beliefs, Attitude, Subjective Norms, Enabling Factors Model in a Group of Students in Isfahan, Iran**

The prevalence of tobacco use is increasing among the young while the age at the beginning to smoke is decreasing. The goal of this survey was to investigate the effective factors on smoking behavior with Beliefs, Attitude, Subjective Norms, Enabling factors (BASNEF) model in dormitory students of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences.
This descriptive-analytic study included 100 students at dormitories (Jey and Kharrazi) of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences who were smoking. The students were selected by simple random sampling. Data gathering was done by a questionnaire designed by the investigator, which had been examined regarding the validity and reliability. Chi-square and ANOVA tests and Pearson correlation coefficient were used for data analysis.

The results indicated that easy accessibility to cigarette (44%) and cigarette-smoker friends (52%) were the most prevalent ones among important factors evoking smoking behavior and subjective norms respectively. Chi-square test revealed that there was a significant relationship between enabling factors and initiation time of smoking and also between subjective norms and smoker in father ($P<0.05$).

The results demonstrated that subjective norms and enabling factors that affect smoking behavior are important.

Authors: Sharifi Rad Gh, Kamran A.