

ABSTRACT

Background: The risk of intestinal parasite among school going children still remains a high burden in fishing communities, as there is evidently poor sanitation and hygiene. This consequently affects children's health and general well-being hampering learning. This study sought to determine the prevalence of intestinal parasites and associated factors among children aged 5-15 years attending Bwonda primary school, in Mayuge district. Materials and methods: A cross-sectional study was carried out that enrolled 375 study participants. Researcher-administered questionnaires were used to obtain socio-demographic characteristics and risk factors to the acquisition of intestinal parasites. Stool macroscopy, wet preparations and formol-ether concentration technique were used to identify intestinal parasites from stool specimens. Data obtained was analyzed using SPSS and the reports include descriptive statistics and logistic regression to determine the associated risk factors.

Results: The study enrolled 375 pupils, 57.9% (n=217) were females. Their mean age was 8.9 years (range 5-15 years). Thirty participants had intestinal parasites, giving a prevalence of 8.0% (95% Confidence Interval: 6.8-10.13). Three species of intestinal parasites were isolated; *Schistosoma mansoni* (n=17, 56.7%), hook worm ova (n=12, 40.0%), and *Gardia lamblia* (n=1, 3.3%). Intestinal parasites were uniformly distributed among the gender of the participants. The infection was highest among the age categories of 9-12 years (n=16, 53.3%), followed by the 13-15 years (n=9, 30%) and least among the 5-8 years age category (n=5, 16.7%). Multivariate analysis indicated that lack of knowledge about the signs and symptoms of intestinal parasites, non-use of pit latrines to dispose faecal matter, not washing of hands after using a pit latrine, not being dewormed and walking with bare feet were statistically associated with the risk of acquisition of intestinal parasites ($P < 0.05$).

Conclusion and recommendations: There is a high prevalence of intestinal parasites, with the main parasites being *S. mansoni*, hookworm and *Gardia lamblia*. Routine screening and treatment and deworming of children in this area need to be emphasized and improvement of sanitation and hygiene as a way to combat the infestation is to be implemented.