

Abstract

The study was conducted in August 2012 in Gitugi location Murang'a District in Kenya. The purpose of the study was to determine out factors that contribute to persistence of jiggers in Gitugi location which is a resource-poor community where jigger fleas are highly prevalent. The study design used was a Cross-sectional study design where data was collected at a single point in time. In this study both qualitative and quantitative data was collected and analyzed correctly making the study analytical in nature.

Data was collected from two hundred and forty respondents. The majority of the respondents affected (130) 54.7% were male while (110) 45.8% were female respondents. All the respondents had sufficient knowledge about jiggers (240) 100% which is the total sample size of the respondents knew about the jiggers and 40% knew causes of jiggers was due to lack of proper hygiene while (212) 88.33% of the respondents were of the view that poverty contributes to jigger infestation. About (120) 55.05% of the respondents said un-swept houses contributed to jiggers. While (190) 87.96 percent respondents said mud/clay houses with un-cemented floors and un-plastered walls contributed to jiggers infestation.

Conclusions: the study revealed that male respondents aged 5 to 20 years were the most affected by jiggers and this was as a result of neglect either by themselves, their parents or guardians. However, the study also showed that all age groups were prone to jigger infestation. In addition to this, the highest number of individuals infested with jiggers had knowledge about it, but did not follow appropriate treatment and measures to control them. The low monthly income of the respondents that was equal or less than US\$50 was not enough to cater for their important basic needs was significant to the jigger infestation.

The health care inspectors were on the ground, but did not really visit the communities at large. The long distances from the health care facilities made individual not seek medical attention and therefore continued to suffer more.

Recommendation: The GOK together with MOH should recognize jigger infestation as a serious medical issue and come up with appropriate measures towards jigger eradication. This should include organizing sensitization workshop that should be attended by all provincial public health officers' countrywide, university students, teachers and other related departments. Whereby they are taught various ways of eradicating the jigger fleas for example: spraying of infested households and pets with pyrethroids, use potassium permanganate to wash infected person.

In addition, all the stakeholders involved like public health care inspectors should support the government in its jigger infestation treatment and control programs and that the government and the stakeholder should target regions or communities with wash/housing improvement programs.

The ministry of health also should facilitate training for health care workers targeting the communities affected so that they could help in eradicating the jigger flea. Training should focus on how to extra jigger fleas from infected individuals and how to use different disinfectants to control the jigger fleas.