

Abstract

This study was a descriptive cross sectional study on tinea capitis among prepubertal school children in Galle Municipal area.

The Objectives

The objectives of this study were to determine the prevalence of tinea capitis among prepubertal school children in Galle Municipal area, to determine clinical types of tinea capitis and there causative agents, and also to identify the predisposing factors of tinea capitis among the study population.

Methodology

Data Collection

For this study 424 students were selected. The data was collected in September and October 2003 by using an interviewer-administered questionnaire and by taking a brush sample of the scalp, following scalp examination.

Laboratory Procedure

The brush samples were cultured for fungi according to standard laboratory methods.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was done by using EPI 2002 statistical analysis software (CDC).

Results

The sample group included 205 boys (48.3%) and 219 girls (51.7%) in the age group of six to twelve years. The majority were Sinhalese (72.4%) and there were 115 Muslims (27.2%) with only 2 Tamils (0.4%). Two hundred and sixty three (62%) children were from social classes IV and V (Baker and Hall, 1991).

On examination there were 99 children (23.3%) with scaling without associated alopecia or inflammation and 2 children (0.4%) with patchy alopecia without associated scaling or inflammation. Head lice infestation was found in 179 children (42.2%)

When predisposing factors and other factors that could have an impact on prevalence of tinea capitis were considered, sharing of combs was seen among 346 children (81.6%) and sharing of towels was seen among 254 children (60%). Association with pets like cat and dogs was found among 185 children (43.6%) while habits of frequent bathing (72.2%) and frequent application of hair oil (85.5%) was fairly common.

The culture of samples did not grow any dermatophyte. There were 94 fungal isolates out of 424 samples.

Conclusions

Tinea capitis is apparently not a problem in the study area. The habits of frequent bathing and frequent application of hair oil may be unfavourable for tinea capitis infection as well as asymptomatic carriage.