

Few points on trematode

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I was a member of the group of trematode experts at the October 1993 meeting in Manila referred to in "Death by a Fluke" (HEALTH, June 8). There are several issues in this report that I would like to discuss:

1. In the statement on the life cycle you failed to mention the first intermediate host; all trematodes must first develop in a molluscan (usually a snail) host before infecting the second host, usually the infecting agent.

2. Your report should have stressed the fact that these flukes are acquired from things people eat. Asians enjoy eating raw food (fish, snails, crabs, aquatic vegetation etc.) and this is the reason why trematode infections abound in Asians. You see very few fluke infections

in people who eat their food cooked.

3. Paragonimiasis is not only misdiagnosed for tuberculosis in India. This happens in all paragonimus endemic countries. It is not uncommon to find patients of Asian origin in the U.S. with paragonimiasis that are initially treated for tuberculosis.

4. Where did you get the "12% dose of praziquantel for treatment of paragonimiasis?" The standard dose is 75 mg/kg body weight per day in three doses for two days.

JOHN H. CROSS
From Maung Shwe Yoe in
ASIAWEEK, JULY 27, 1994