GROWTH REDUCTION AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOLCHILDREN WITH LIGHT TRICHURIASIS IN MALAYSIA TREATED WITH ALBENDAZOLE

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Abstract. We studied asymptomatic primary schoolchildren in northeastern Malaysia with light to moderate trichuriasis to determine the effect of albendazole treatment on growth rates and TNF-alpha levels. Thirty-seven schoolchildren aged 6-7 years with stool samples positive for Trichuris trichiura and negative for other geohelmints and protozoa were randomized to receive albendazole 400 mg or a placebo daily for 2 days. Anthropometric parameters at baseline, 3, 6 and 12 months were compared between the 2 groups. The placebo group had a significantly greater increase in height ($p=0.04$) than the albendazole treatment group. There were no significant differences in urinary TNF-alpha levels ($p=0.8$) between the 2 groups and no significant changes between baseline and 1 month post-treatment levels. Further studies are needed to determine the etiology of this apparent association between the albendazole treatment group and the delay in growth rate at 6 months post-treatment.

Keywords: Trichuris trichiura, albendazole, growth, schoolchildren, Malaysia

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