TOXOCARA EGG SOIL CONTAMINATION AND ITS SEROPREVALENCE AMONG PUBLIC SCHOOL CHILDREN IN LOS BAÑOS, LAGUNA, PHILIPPINES

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Abstract. The soil-transmitted nematode *Toxocara* sp has little epidemiological information in the Philippines. In this study, we studied the extent of soil contamination with *Toxocara* eggs and the seroprevalence of *Toxocara* infection among public school children in Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines. Soil samples were obtained from public schools, backyards, and empty lots in Los Baños to examine for the presence of *Toxocara* eggs using the modified sucrose flotation technique. Serum samples were obtained from public school children in Los Baños and examined for *Toxocara* infection using an ELISA test. Of the 200 soil samples, 85 (43%) were positive for *Toxocara* eggs at a concentration of 1 egg/g of soil. Forty-two percent of soil samples obtained from the public school, 45% of backyard samples, and 40% of empty lot samples were positive. Of the 75 serum samples from children, 37 (49%) were positive for *Toxocara* infection. There was a positive correlation between *Toxocara* egg concentration and seroprevalence of *Toxocara* infection. Results showed a high prevalence of soil contamination and a high seroprevalence of *Toxocara* infection among children in Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines.

Keywords: *Toxocara*, soil contamination, seroprevalence, school children, Philippines