OCCURRENCE OF DERMATITIS AMONG PADDY FIELD FARMERS IN FOUR VILLAGES IN THE KOTA BHARU AREA, KELANTAN

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ABSTRACT

Dermatitis has been plaguing the farmers in the Kota Bharu area, Kelantan since the early 1990s. It was a serious problem and in certain areas farmers were forced to abandon rice growing and opt for tobacco cultivation, hence resulting in decrease in rice production. In Malaysia dermatitis, most probably cercarial dermatitis, is an important cause of economic loss to many paddy farmers because fields are left uncultivated due to sores on the farmers hands and feet. A survey was undertaken to investigate the occurrence and prevalence of dermatitis amongst the paddy field farmers in the Kota Bharu area and to determine the cause of dermatitis. The results obtained in this study indicate that dermatitis is occupation specific, occurring mainly amongst paddy field farmers with a prevalence rate of 47.9 %. The most likely form of dermatitis amongst paddy field farmers are cercarial dermatitis. The paddy field farmers are usually infected during the preparation of the fields and during the transplanting stage. The water sources for irrigation are mainly from the river and irrigation canal and water source is highly associated ($\chi^2 = 8.440$, df = 3, $p = 0.038$) to the infection. The rearing of ducks ($\chi^2 = 4.561$, df = 1, $p = 0.033$) and cows ($\chi^2 = 9.118$, df = 1, $p = 0.003$) are also related to the occurrence of dermatitis and increase the risk of infection. Ducks and cows are the hosts to schistosomes and the cercariae of these schistosomes are known to cause cercarial dermatitis amongst humans. The ducks and cows are the most likely source of cercariae causing dermatitis amongst the farmers in the Kota Bharu area.
ABSTRAK

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