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Medical Parasitology: A Brief Note

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EDITORIAL

Medical parasitology is a discipline of medicine that deals with organisms (parasites) that live on or within the human body, either temporarily or permanently (host). Parasites and hosts come in a variety of forms. The host-parasite interaction refers to the struggle for dominance that occurs between the parasite and the host. As a result, the host may have the upper hand and remain healthy, or the host may lose the competition and get a disease. The parasites that infect humans are either unicellular (protozoa) or multicellular (parasites) (helminthes and arthropods). Endoparasites (parasites that reside inside the host) and exoparasites (parasites that live on the host's surface) are two types of parasites (ectoparasites). Endoparasites can be classed as intestinal, atrial, or bodily tissue endoparasites, and they can cause major health concerns. Ectoparasites are arthropods that either cause sickness or serve as vectors for parasite transmission. Most parasite diseases and mechanisms of transmission were discovered thousands of years ago, and human evolution and parasitic infections have gone hand in hand. Environmental changes, human activity, and population mobility all have a significant impact on parasitic disease transmission, distribution, prevalence, and incidence in a community. Parasites can enter the human body through a variety of routes, including the oral route, the skin, arthropod vectors, and sexual interaction.

Innate immunity, which provides initial protection against infection, and adaptive immunity, which is more effective, is two types of host defence systems. Adaptive cellular and humoral immune responses are induced against a wide range of antigenic constituents once parasites have eluded innate host defences. Parasitic disease diagnosis is based on a variety of laboratory tests, imaging modalities, and endoscopy, as well as the clinical picture and geographic location. Depending on the tissue invaded, parasitic infections can have a wide range of clinical symptoms. Direct microscopy relies on the inspection of various specimens to detect the parasite (stool, urine, blood, CSF and tissue biopsies). Antigen and antibody detection tests are examples of immunodiagnostic procedures. Molecular diagnostic methods provide a high level of sensitivity and specificity. Nanotechnology has recently been used in diagnostic methods including nano-devices. The interplay among various factors that determine parasite transmission and persistence, such as the environment, human behaviour, and socio-cultural factors, has a role in parasite control and prevention.