Blastocystis spp as the most prevalent enteroparasite in a community based study carried out in Niterói, RJ - Brazil

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Intestinal parasites unfortunately remain as an important and neglected public health problem despite their social impact and high prevalence rates among those who live in precarious conditions. It is a general concern that there is a direct link between infections and education as well as low quality of life. Still, they are an important cause of malabsorption, chronic diarrhea, anemia, malnutrition, abdominal pain, learning difficulties and growth dysfunction. The goal of the study was to provide additional data on infection by intestinal parasites in resident children and their parents and relatives living in low income communities placed in Niterói (RJ). Additionally, lectures have been carried out in order to provide and improve lessons on health education in the studied communities. Briefly, a total of 104 fresh fecal samples were collected and prepared for microscopical analysis through Hoffman, Pons &Janer (1934) and Willis (1921) techniques. Aliquots were obtained from fresh samples and frozen in order to perform molecular tests. The parasitological techniques carried out were able to detect 57% of positive samples and a predominance of protozoa infections. *Blastocystis spp* was detected in 48% of the positive samples, followed by *Giardia intestinalis* (13,4%), and the non-pathogenic *Endolimax nana* (10%).Eggs from the nematoid *Enterobius vermicularis* were found in 2% of the samples and this one was the unique helminth found. It can be concluded that *Blastocystis* spp is actually the most prevalent protozoan parasite and helminth infections are apparently scarce among children and residents of the studied communities. Continuous parasitological surveillance must be sustained in order to provide secure data on the epidemiological conditions of these communities.