

## Assessment of the methodological strategies adopted for the teaching of helminthology in the community

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Gastrointestinal helminths have a wide geographic distribution, high prevalence rates and significant morbidity, constituting a public health problem. Measures that help to prevent and control these diseases, such as health education, are necessary. The aim of this study was to evaluate the methodological strategies adopted for teaching helminthology in the urban and rural schools from different municipalities in the Rio Grande do Norte (RN) state and stimulate future health agents that multiply the knowledge and practice social actions promoting to prophylaxis and control of these diseases as increasing health and local education. The results were obtained based on activities developed in extension project involving teaching strategies for high school students from in the municipalities of Macaíba, Parnarmirim, São Gonçalo do Amarante and Ceará-Mirim. The activities comprised three different moments, being divided into theoretical and practical foundations. The parasites cycles and prophylaxis for the respective diseases and the nematodes observation under optical microscope were approached in the first moment. In a second moment, playful activities development (different sets of questions and answers developed by the project team and parodies) as a form of review and encouragement to the students to review the content applied at the first moment. Finally, presentation of activities developed by the students on the subjects studied. In addition to these strategies, an initial and final questionnaire was used to analyse the hygiene habits, prophylaxis and knowledge about the main parasites with the purpose of comparing the students' knowledge before and after the activities. The project was carried out between 2015 and 2016. A total of 533 questionnaires were analyzed, which 307 were initial and 226 were final. In one of the tests, it was assessed the basic knowledge that students had about worms and was expected that most students would have this knowledge because the content covered in high school on helminth infections were on the 2nd and 3rd year. However, 45% of the students did not have the basic knowledge about worms. In addition, 55% of them only knew some parasites, such as ascariasis or taeniasis. It was a worrying fact, suggesting that even with the content inserted in the high school curriculum it is not enough for the student's formation. In addition to partial or no knowledge, students did not know why we had worms (83%), which means they were unaware of prophylactic measures associated with each disease as well as simple hygiene habits (17%) or could know but did not put into practice correctly or only knew about washing food and hands. These data still confirm the partial knowledge about the worms. Also was observed that after using different methodologies, students learn all prophylaxis methods for each helminth. Both workshop and teaching strategies were scored with a grade higher than seven by 97% of the students.

Key words: health education; high school; public health; teaching methods