

Characterization of life habits and socioeconomic status of students who participated in actions involving health education

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The prevalence rates due to parasitic infections generate serious public health problems mainly in developing countries because they are closely associated with poor sanitation conditions, the consumption of impure water, inadequate hygiene habits and inefficient health education perpetuating the constant cycle in this population. The aim of the study was to establish a relationship between socioeconomic conditions and health education of high school students in related to worms in municipalities of Parnamirim, Macaíba, São Gonçalo do Amarante and Ceará-Mirim, located in Rio Grande do Norte (RN) state. A descriptive research was done in order to characterize the students' knowledge about this subject. They answered an initial questionnaire with 18 questions of multiple choice, mainly about hygiene, feeding habits and sanitary conditions where they live. The students were over 15 years old from high school located in the urban and rural areas of the municipalities and participating of an extension project involving health education. The project was carried out between 2015 and 2016 and total of 533 questionnaires were analyzed, which 307 were initial and 226 were final. 72% of students live at urban area, although many students did not know how to report this data, however, it is believed that many of them reside in the rural area due to schools location. Regarding to housing type, housing in clay house (0.7%), wood (1.6%), masonry (79%) and did not know how to answer (19%). Most of the houses had tap water (93%), while 7% did not. Besides that, 74% depended exclusively on the public network for water supply, 18% well or cistern and 6% did not know how to respond. 99% of the houses had bathroom and in the most of the residences the sanitary sewer system was by septic tank (79%) and not by public network (13%), besides 7% did not know how to respond and 1% was on the ground. About hygiene and food habits, the consumption of filtered water is practiced by the majority (64%) followed by unfiltered (28%), was not able to respond (7%) and boiled (1%). About the consumption of processed raw meat, the majority was not (52%), yes (40%) and was not able to answer (22%). Swimming in unknown rivers or ponds was identified as common (53%), 37% said they did not practice and 18% did not know how to respond 67% of the students had dogs and cats at home, reinforcing the high prevalence in the municipalities of Ceará-Mirim for schistosomiasis and in others for the appearance of larva migrans. This study reaffirm the established relationship between the level of health education with the socioeconomic conditions and add new information for future research and observations about the level of high school students' health education in different municipalities in the RN.

Key words: health education; high school students; socioeconomic conditions.