

Prevalence and Risk Factors Associated with Head Louse (*Pediculus humanus capitis*) among Primary School Girls in Qom Province, Central Iran

Authors

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Abstract

Background: Head louse infestation is highly common in collective centers such as schools, garrisons and campuses. This study was done to determine the prevalence and risk factors associated with *Pediculus humanus capitis* in primary school girls in Qom Province central Iran.

Materials and Methods: This descriptive –analytic study was conducted among 1,725 feminine primary students from 89 schools of Qom province, Central Iran were randomly selected during 2015 to 2017. Data collection was done using standard check list that was provided by the Iran Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and physical exams of the hair by visual scalp examination. Head examinations were performed by medical entomologist experts. Analysis of data was done using SPSS version 20.0 software.

Results: The prevalence rate of infestation was 13.28%. The rate of head lice infestation was 13.73% in the urban areas and 10.22% in the villages. According to the multivariable logistic regression analysis, a significant relationship was observed between *Pediculus capitis* and each of these factors: family size, water source, family income (per month for each family, in US dollars), father occupation, parental education, access to primary health care services, having previous history of *Pediculus capitis* infestation, number of comb uses per day ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: The head lice infestation is a significant public health issue in primary school girls of Qom province. Risk factors associated with head louse among primary school girls were some demographic and socioeconomic factors. Improvement of these status and designing and implementing appropriate educational and preventive programs can be helpful for surveillance of infestation among primary school girls.

Keywords

Head lice infestation; Iran; Pediculosis; Primary school; Students