Prevalence and Risk Factors Associated with Head Louse (Pediculus humanus capitis) in Central Iran

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Abstract

Background

Recognition of head lice prevalence and related risk factors contributing in spreading the disease is a step forward to the control of this important health problem. This survey was done to determine prevalence and risk factors associated with head louse (Pediculus Humanus Capitis) in Central Iran.

Materials and Methods

In this descriptive-analytic study, a total of 38,237 suspected cases of head lice infestation that were referred to public health centers in Qom province during 2016 were studied. Data collection was done using standard check list that was conducted and approved by the Health Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran and physical examination of the hairs by visual inspections of scalp and hair for the presence of adult lice, nymphs, and eggs (nits) in all of suspected cases. For data analysis, Chi-square and Multiple Logistic Regression Tests were utilized.

Results

A total of 11,223 (29.35%) out of 38,237 suspected cases of all ages were found to have pediculosis. According to the multivariable logistic regression analysis, a significant relationship was observed between Pediculus capitis infestation and each of these factors: educational grade, family size, family income, having previous history of P. capitis infestation, number of combing per day ($P<0.05$). Head lice infestation was detected in 33.45% (7,182/21,469) of females and 24.09% (4,041/16,768) of males.

Conclusion

High prevalence of P. capitis among people of all ages, especially in students who reside in Qom province was attributable to inadequate access to health educators, health facilities, inattention to personal health, and other related factors.

Key words: Risk Factors, Head ,Louse ,Pediculus, capitis, Iran