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HUMAN PEDICULOSIS AND ANAEMIA: A “LOUSY” ASSOCIATION

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Background and aims: We aim to

1. Present three cases where severe head lice infestation was associated with significant iron deficiency anaemia.
2. Critically evaluate the available evidence to identify whether head lice infestation can cause anaemia by chronic blood loss.

Methods: Case series; literature review

Results: 3 patients were seen with head lice hyperinfestation and severe anaemia-

1. A 3-year-old girl with poor hygiene and developmental delay
2. The 5-year-old sibling of the above child
3. A 15-year-old girl, under psychiatric follow up.

Extensive laboratory investigations and dietary evaluation failed to reveal a cause for anaemia. The anaemia and head lice infestation could well be coincidental findings.

Literature review identified studies in cattle which showed strong association of louse infestation and anaemia. No similar studies were identified in humans. Head lice can cause anaemia in humans if, over a period of time the amount of blood sucked overtakes the rate of production of red blood cells (RBC). This depends upon a fine balance between different variables in the host and parasite which are summarised in **Image 1**.

Parameter	Available Data
No. of lice on the head	Average of 10 to 30; Higher numbers up to 2657 reported.
Life span	3-4 weeks
Male/Female Ratio	Relative sex ratio, male/(male + female) = 0.4
Average no. of eggs laid per day	10
Rate of attrition	Variable
Frequency of feeding	No hard data; Assumed to be 3 per day
Amount of blood sucked	Adult female louse: 0.0001579 ml Adult male louse: 0.0000657 ml Nymph: 0.0000387 ml

[Image 1]

Based on these values a review concluded that there will not be clinically significant blood loss. However, mathematical modelling using differential equations suggests that anaemia can occur over approximately 6 years in untreated severe infestation.

Conclusion: Anaemia due to head lice is unlikely, in an otherwise healthy child. However untreated, prolonged and severe infestation might lead to anaemia in the long term.

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MOTHERS PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE HEALTH CENTER PRACTICES ON CHILD FEEDING: AN EXPLORATORY QUALITATIVE STUDY IN DAMAVAND, IRAN

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Introduction & purpose: Health care personnel have an important role in supporting childhood feeding. This study conducted to explore mothers' perceptions about primary health care services to support child feeding in Damavand in 2008.

Methods: In this qualitative research, perceptions of mothers were explored through focus group discussions (FGDs). Eleven FGD sessions were arranged with groups of mothers with below 2 years old children in urban and rural areas of Damavand,

a city in north of Tehran. Each session with 8-10 mothers continued for one and half hours. Data were recorded, transcribed and analyzed using content analysis.

Findings: Three themes were identified:

(1) mothers came to the health centers to have the medical check-ups such as vaccination, for their children;

(2) mothers visited the health centers to have child weighed and get advice about breast-feeding; and;

(3) mothers used the health centers facilities for the somatic examination of their children, between the age of 2 and 18 months.

Conclusion: The mothers viewed the health care centers services for medical check-ups were suitable. There were not enough supportive nutrition education programs about introducing and preparing complementary feeding. Health care personnel should do more to support mothers. Developing and implementing an interactive nutrition education program for mothers and healthcare personnel is necessary.

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PARENT'S/ CARER'S PERCEPTION OF OUTPATIENT CLINIC LETTERS

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Background: In 2004, the National Health Service announced that letters from consultants to the General Practitioners should be copied to parents of young children. Department of Health has published numerous documents reiterating the benefits of copying clinic letters to patients. Published data also suggests that most parents and young people want correspondence following outpatient appointments. Data is scarce on parents/ carers' perspective on the content of clinic letters and their usefulness.

Aim: To determine the opinion of parents/ carers on the value of clinic letters received following their children's outpatient clinic consultation.

Methods: 100 parents whose children had at least 1 previous outpatient clinic visit and had subsequently received a clinic letter were asked to complete a questionnaire.

Results: Almost all of the parents felt that the copies of clinic letters were useful, they always read the letters and that the doctor's impression of their child's problem was satisfying. Majority of carers felt that the whole of the letter was useful. 3/4 felt that the all the information in the letter was an accurate reflection of their consultation. 4/5 agreed that the language was easy to understand. Internet was the most common source of information if parents did not understand parts in the letter. Overwhelming majority kept and filed the clinic letter.

Conclusion: Nearly all the parents appreciate receiving clinic letters. Most of them read and save the letters for future reference. Further studies are required to evaluate the financial implications and alternative ways of communication like emailing letters.

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AUTHORS' DIDACTIC METHOD FOR TEACHING STUDENTS THAT HYPOGLICEMIA IN CHILDREN COULD BE A SYMPTOM OF RARE DISEASES AND SYNDROMES

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Background and aims: Hypoglycemia as a life-threatening state should be described precisely in an educational program of pediatrics at university. Authors' proposal is to suggest academic teachers for a presentation a role of general examination and blood analysis in children, especially neonates. Since hypoglycemia could be a symptom of rare disease or syndrome, some haunting ways of learning help students in being aware of recognition of them.

Methods: The problem is to show students typical characteristics of diseases and syndromes with hypoglycemia, for instance that seeking acidosis in results of laboratorial analyses is a proper way to diagnose glutaric acidemia. Demonstration of appropriate dysmorphias noticeable in general examination or medical imaging as a part of lecture or in chapter of handbook is an example of briefing for the purpose of thinking about Beckwith-Wiedemann syndrome or de Morsier syndrome