

ABSTRACT

A cross-sectional community and laboratory based descriptive study was carried out to study the intestinal parasitic infestation and sociodemographic characteristics of food handlers at household level in North Dagon Township, Yangon Region using proforma from September to November 2010. Apart from that, observation of sampled key food handlers and their households to assess the sanitation facilities and personal hygiene status by using checklists. The study was undertaken to determine the prevalence of intestinal parasites among 67 key food handlers. Fresh stool specimens were collected and examined for cysts and eggs of parasites in Parasitology Section, National Health Laboratory. The findings indicated that the mean age of key food handlers was 37.8 years. Majority of food handlers were (31-45) year age group (56.7 percent). More than two thirds of food handlers were low and middle educational status. There was significant association between intestinal parasitic infestation and educational level ($p=0.02$). Ninety percent of key food handlers were housewives and two thirds of these housewives were dependents. *Ascaris lumbricoides* was the most prevalent parasites species (18 percent), followed by *Entamoeba histolytica* (10 percent), *Entamoeba coli* (4.5 percent) and *Trichuris trichiura* (4.5 percent). Small percentages of intestinal parasites detected in the stools of food handlers included *Giardia lamblia*, *Enterobius vermicularis*, *Strongyloides stercoralis* and *Blastocystis hominis*. None of the food handlers was positive for hookworm species, *Taenia species*, *Schistosoma species* and *Hymenolepis species*. Nine percent of food handlers were infected with mixed intestinal parasites. The combination of *A. lumbricoides* and *E. histolytica* was the commonest. Improper personal hygiene, dirty nails and uncleanliness of clothing implied higher risk of infection ($p=0.000$).