



Amoebic liver abscess: a neglected tropical disease

Neglected tropical diseases (NTD) are diverse and affect more than a billion people, causing considerable social disruption in some of the poorest economies of the world. Although coordinated global strategies have been developed and implemented for the prevention and control of NTDs,¹ the WHO list of NTDs omits an important disease: intestinal amoebiasis caused by *Entamoeba histolytica*, a silent killer in many low-income countries. *E histolytica* is the second leading cause of parasitic diseases globally² and causes substantial morbidity and mortality through invasive amoebic colitis and amoebic liver abscess.

Patients with intestinal amoebiasis remain predominantly as asymptomatic carriers and invasiveness

occurs only in a few individuals. Methodological difficulties result in variable estimates of the prevalence of intestinal amoebiasis, ranging from around 8–14%^{3,4} to as high as 40%.⁵ In an era of global travel, *E histolytica* is the third most frequently isolated intestinal pathogen among travellers returning from low-income countries to higher-income countries presenting with infectious gastrointestinal disease.⁶ The heavy burden of this intestinal pathogen becomes a greater threat to human life when invasiveness results in amoebic liver abscess. Amoebic liver abscess is the most common form of extra-intestinal amoebiasis and the fourth leading cause of mortality worldwide due to any parasitic infection, with an estimated 50 000 deaths annually caused