

Creeping eruption among Nallur temple devotees during 2001 & 2002

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During August 2001, devotees of Nallur temple who paid their vows by performing "side roll" (Tamil "pirathaddai") were severely infected with dog's hook worm (*Ancylostoma caninum*). Among the total devotees (1014), 272 (26.8%) were effected. Among the victims, 67 (24.6%) had to seek treatment at the skin clinic, Teaching hospital, Jaffna. The clinical symptoms included red elevation of the skin (papules), itchy red zigzag lines and blisters. The main cause of the infection was suspected to be the contamination of sand, spread around the temple with dog faecal matter. Analysis of dog faecal matter, around temple and sand samples revealed the presence of parasitic eggs. Histological observations of the lesions showed inflammatory cells but no larvae. Precautionary measures were made to minimize the condition during 2002. In year 2002, sand was collected from areas uncontaminated with dog faeces, spread and sprinkled with water to allow hatching of parasite eggs. Then sand was dried in direct sunlight to kill the larvae and subsequently spreads around the temple. The infection rate was 19.6% (258) out of 1319 devotees and the patients attended the skin clinic was 9.3% (24). These results indicated a reduction of 7.5% of infection. For further reduction, the need of more comprehensive and strong preventive measures such as collection of sand, from dog's faecal contamination free area, preventing the dogs entering the area where the sand is going to be treated and spread and deworming the dogs living in the surrounding of the temple, are essential.