



PREVALENCE OF *Entamoeba histolytica* INFECTION IN PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN IN ZARIA, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

An immunoassay of *Entamoeba histolytica* infection in pre-school children aged 3-60 months was carried out in Zaria, Nigeria using specific/sensitive ELISA. Stool samples were collected from children presenting with diarrhoea (129), and without diarrhoea (54), from two hospitals which covered Zaria city and its environs. The TechLab *E. histolytica II* ELISA kit was used to carry out the test. Out of 183 stool samples screened, 78 (42.62%) tested positive for the parasite. From the study, there was significant association between infection and diarrhoea, and between infection and the home location of the children ($p < 0.05$). Age, sex, socio-economic status, type of toilet facility, source of drinking water and finger sucking habit showed no significant association with the infection ($p > 0.05$). This suggests that there is an underlying factor at play, that infection may have been influenced by sanitation and personal hygiene of caregivers. The study further suggests that *Entamoeba histolytica* is a major cause of diarrhoea in children in the study area and highlights the need for public health education amongst caregivers towards controlling the infection.

Key words: Children, diarrhea, *E. histolytica*, antibodies, Zaria

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