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Cryptosporidiosis Among Children Attending Al-Nasser Pediatric Hospital, Gaza, Palestine

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Abstract: Aim: The present study was undertaken to determine the prevalence of cryptosporidiosis in patients with diarrhea who attended Al-Nasser Pediatric Hospital in Gaza. Materials and Methods: From January to May 2005, single stool specimens from each of 416 children attending Al-Nasser Hospital were examined by Ziehl Neelsen (ZN) stain and ELISA for the presence of *Cryptosporidium* oocysts. Results: *Cryptosporidium* oocysts were detected in 62 (14.9%) of the tested specimens by acid-fast staining technique and in 68 (16.3%) using ELISA kit. The number of infected females was found to be significantly higher than males ($P = 0.03$). The highest number of infected children was observed in March. *Entamoeba histolytica/dispar*, *Giardia lamblia*, *Ascaris lumbricoides* and *Hymenolepis nana* were the most common parasites detected (14.4%, 7.2%, 0.7% and 0.7%, respectively). Conclusions: It is concluded that cryptosporidiosis still exists among children in Gaza. In addition, the diagnosis of protozoal parasites such as *Cryptosporidium* should draw more attention and should not be neglected due to its clinical importance.

Key Words: Antigen, children, *Cryptosporidium*, diarrhea, prevalence

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