Abstract

OBJECTIVE:

To determine the prevalence and aetiology of dermatophyte infections in relation to social economic factors in primary school children in Kibera.

DESIGN:

A cross-sectional descriptive study.

SETTING:

City council sponsored schools namely Olympic, Kibera, Ayany and Mbagathi way all in Kibera, the largest of the informal settlement within Nairobi which is home to between 700,000-1,000,000 inhabitamts. The study was conducted between September 2006 and February 2007.

SUBJECTS:

A total of 422 primary school children from the ages of five years to 15 years were selected for the study.

RESULTS:

The prevalence of dermatophytoses was 11.2% with tinea capitis being the most common type while the grey patch form being the dominant clinical manifestation. There was a significant difference ($p = 0.001$) in dermatophytoses in different schools with Olympic primary school registering the highest prevalence (22.6%). The highest infection rate occurred among six to eight years age bracket in both sexes compared to other age brackets ($p = 0.002$). The genera of fungi associated with dermatophytoses were isolated indicating the number in each species as follows; T. violecium (35), T. mentagrophytes(3), T. terestre(3), T. schoenleinii(2), and T. interdigitale(1), M. canis(2), M. equinum(1) and E. flocossum(1). T. violecium was the predominant species isolated, at 35/48 (71%) followed by T. mentagrophytes and T. terrestre at 3/48 (6%) each.

CONCLUSION:

The study indicates high prevalence of 11.2% dermatophyte infection among the school children in Kibera. Factors contributing to the high frequency and chronic occurrences of ring worm in this area may include poor living environment, children interaction patterns and poor health seeking behaviour. There is need for health education and public awareness campaigns among the communities in urban informal settlements on healthy seeking behaviors and hygiene in order to reduce transmission and severe clinical manifestations.