

JCHS-IQ-01-2024 **Worm Passing from the Mouth**

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ANSWER TO JCHS-IQ-01-2024

Ascariasis

Discussion

Ascariasis is common in developing countries with a tropical climate where sanitation and hygiene are poor. *Ascaris* can form a worm bolus, which can cause small intestinal obstruction or perforation. *Ascaris* can enter the biliary tract and pancreas via the ampulla of Vater, resulting in acute cholangitis, cholecystitis, pancreatitis, and liver abscess [1]. Intestinal helminth infections were found to be prevalent among pregnant women according to a study done in Kenya. The study found that pregnant women aged below 29 years and those with primary level of education were at a higher risk of infection compared to those aged ≥ 29 years with secondary level of education [2]. Previous research has suggested that helminth infection during pregnancy can result in maternal anemia and poor birth outcomes, necessitating antihelminthic treatment (albendazole, mebendazole, and ivermectin). Initial studies established the safety of common helminth treatments. These studies have generally found that treatment does not result in an increased prevalence of birth defects [3]. With increased international travel and migration of vulnerable populations, clinicians will encounter some of the nematode infections in pregnant patients. Clinicians need to be more aware of parasitic infections in the immigrant and refugee populations.

Learning Points

- *Ascaris lumbricoides* can cause intestinal obstruction or perforation by forming a worm bolus. It can also cause severe complications i.e. acute cholangitis, cholecystitis, pancreatitis, and liver abscesses.
- Healthcare providers should be aware of the increased risk of parasitic infections in immigrant and refugee populations due to global travel and migration.

Conflict of Interest

Authors declare none.

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