

EXISTENCE OF HYMENOLEPIS NANA IN PORTO RICO¹

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The existence of *Hymenolepis nana* in the United States has been reported so frequently, that nowadays it is considered as one of the most common of the taenia affecting man. From what we have been able to ascertain, it had not yet been found in Porto Rico. The cases we offer should, therefore be of some interest, as a further illustration of the universal prevalence of this parasite.

Upon examining the forty-seven children at the Hatillo Orphan Asylum, in search of uncinaria, we discovered the eggs of *Hymenolepis nana* in the feces of three of them. This asylum is entirely under the control of persons from the locality, and admits children from six to twelve years of age. One of the children had been in the asylum three years, and another, two. Neither of the children or the director have ever been away from the Island and their only contact with outsiders is confined to the local schools.

The ages of the three ranged from ten to twelve years. We had examined and treated them all for uncinariasis a year previous, without finding cestode eggs. They showed no symptoms attributable to the presence of taenia or uncinaria. As was discovered later, infection by the latter parasite was very slight.

We treated two of the children for uncinariasis. This treatment consisted of 1.5 c. c. of tetrachloride of carbon followed a week later by treatment consisting of 1 c. c. of essence of chenopodium. After each treatment we washed and analyzed the feces at the expiration of forty-eight hours without finding taenias, though we did find a few uncinaria. It is possible that we missed a few segments of taenia inasmuch as it is hard to identify them. However a subsequent microscopic examination still revealed cestode eggs.

We then resorted to oleoresin of the male fern, 1 gm. in fractional doses, twenty-four hours after a milk diet, and followed after twelve hours by a purge of sulphate of magnesia. We treated the three orphans. For a period of twenty-four hours we collected,

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washed, sifted and examined their feces. Due to their smallness, great transparency and fragility, we probably failed to discover some worms and segments in spite of our pains in searching for them.

From one boy we secured segments of one hundred worms, and those of four from the other two. In many cases the tiny heads were missing. These cestodes corresponded in every way with the description of *Hymenolepis nana* in various text-books, and to the knowledge we had already acquired of samples observed elsewhere.

Though this parasite had not been found previously in Porto Rico, it seems nevertheless obvious that it has gotten a foothold in the Island and will in all probability be found henceforth with relative frequency.