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Increased prevalence of cysticercosis and taeniasis among professional fried pork vendors and the general population of a village in the Peruvian highlands. Cysticercosis Working Group in Peru

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Abstract

Two different populations in Saylla, a Peruvian village near Cusco, known for chicharrones, a local pork dish, were surveyed by serology and stool examination to determine the prevalence and epidemiologic characteristics of *Taenia solium* infection. Group I (n=43), the chicharroneros, were members of families professionally devoted to the making and selling of chicharrones, and Group II (n=102) was a sample of the general population of the same village. Unlike people in Group I, general villagers only occasionally prepare or sell this food product, and then only to their neighbors or relatives. The prevalence of taeniasis was extremely high (8.6%) for the chicharroneros and 3% for the general villagers. Seroprevalence for cysticercosis by immunoblot was similarly high in both groups (23.3% and 23.8%, respectively). Being female, older than 30, and having daily contact with pork were factors strongly associated with a positive serologic result for cysticercosis in the chicharroneros, whereas males were more frequently seropositive in the general villagers group. Antibody reaction to more antigen bands in immunoblots and neurologic symptoms were more common among the chicharroneros. Also, in the general villagers group, seroprevalence increased with each exposure factor, ranging from 9.4% in individuals who did not raise pigs to 50% in the small subgroup that raised pigs, butchered their own animals, sold pork, and sold chicharrones, suggesting that these activities are related to increased risk for tapeworm or larval infection.

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