Minireview Article

Infection of snail host with trematode larval stages in India: A minireview

Abstract:

Digenetic life cycle is very complex completing in an intermediate and definitive hosts. In trematode parasite, snails serve as the first intermediate host harbouring its larval stages such as sporocyst, redia and cercaria and the vertebral host servingas their definitive host. So,snail infection with trematodeparasite indirectly resultin the infection of the definitive host including human. In India, limited studies are available on the infection status of snail host with different trematodes larval stages. Most of the studies are confined in the central India, few from the south region but almost no reports are available from the north eastern states. But, native peoplesin some states of north eastern India, usually consumes snails as their delicacy. From the present analysis, there arises urgency for an extensive survey in the infection status of snail host with various parasites in every corners of the country.

Keywords: Snails, trematode, cercaria, intramolluscan, India,

1. Introduction

India lies in thesub- tropical region which has a rich flora and fauna. The environmenthasfavourable conditions for the growth and propagation of helminthic parasite thus they are highly diverse in nature. They are found parasitizing and infecting a wide range of vertebrate host. Most of the parasitic infections are highly concern as they pose an important public health issues, particularly in tropical and subtropical regions [1].

Among the helminth parasite, the digenetic trematode also known as flukes are common parasites of wild and domestic animals [2]. Some of them are medically important, as causing variousdiseasein human such as paragonimiasis, Opisthorchis, Clonorchis, Schistosomiasis, fasciolosis, etc, especially in south east Asia countries [3,4,5]. The life cycle of digenetic trematode is very complex completing in one or more than one intermediate host depending on the type of species [6,7,8, 9]. In its life cycle, molluscs or freshwater snail serve as a first intermediate host where its asexual reproduction occur, harbouring the larval stages- Radia, sporocyst, cercaria, metacercaria. The sexual reproduction of the parasite occur in vertebrate definitive host ranging from fish, amphibian, reptiles, birds and mammals, thus affecting their health andcan even led totheir death [10, 11,12].

2. Snail borne parasitic diseases (SBPD)

Snails are a good source of proteins, minerals and have been used as a food supplements. They inhabit in all forms of water bodies ranging from ponds, small streams, large lakes and rivers [13]. They are consume widely by the local population especially in south-East Asian countries as a delicacy and also as a part of customary. Many freshwater snails have been harvested in Indo-Burma region for consumption process [14,15]. The digenean trematodes commonly used two major snails groups namely prosobranchs and pulmonates for

completing their life cycle (16). In at least 71 species of trematode, snails in the group of *Lymnaea* are responsible for establishing their infection (17). So, they are highly significant medically as their consumption has been associated with various food borne trematodiasis (18). Among them, snail borne parasitic diseases (SBPD) are one of the major parasitic diseases which are clinically important and are widely prevalent particularly in underdeveloped countries. Because of the snails serving as an intermediate host for different trematode harbouring its larval stages have contributed important role in transmitting many helminthic diseases(19,20). SBPD has been reported in approximately 90 countries with millions of people are being infected. For some trematode species namely *A. cantonensis* and *S. mansoni*, snails are the only intermediate hosts, and for some species namely*C. sinensis, P. westermani, F. buski*, and *F. hepatica* snail host serve as the first intermediate hosts. These undergo several larval stages development within the snails, thus showing that the snail host are very important for the completion of their life cycle.

3. SBPD in India

In India, snailsbelong to a class of gastropodshave been reported serving as an intermediate host for parasites belonging to families Heterophyidae, Schistosomaitidae, Fascioledea, Opisthorchiidae, Cryptogonimidae, Echinostomatidae and amphistome (2, 21, 22,23,24,25). So, the presence and abundance of snail species in region indicates the possibility of spreading trematode infection (26). Several workers have worked on the trematode intra-molluscan larval stages from different parts of India(26, 27,28,29; 30, 31; 32; 33,34, 35; 36; 37) and has observed infections with different kinds of trematode cercarial stage (amphistome, echinostome, furcocercous, gymnocephalous, monostome, xiphidiocercous etc.) and metacercariae (aspidogaster, echinostome, opisthorchid, plagirchiid, strigeid etc.).The information regarding trematode larval infection in freshwater snails islimited in the public domain (38).

SBPD is one of the neglected tropical disease which draw less attention by the helminthologist towards studying their prevalence, infection status, biology and other related aspects with the exception of some diseases like schistomiasis, fasciolosis, etc. So, helminthologist need to focus and carry out more work on mollusc which is a mandatory intermediate host in order to bring out the clear picture of snail borne infection status, their biology and understanding the relationship with other species.Better understanding of the snail biology explains the difference in parasites community among different snail species which are attributed due to host growth, reproduction and life span (39).In addition to the certain factors of the intermediate host, environmental factors which include light, temperature, water quality also affects the infection of digenetic trematode in intermediate host (40; 41).The population dynamics of the infected intermediate host determines the infection prevalence in the definitive host (42).

In this paper, data on the infection status of trematode larval stages in various snail host prevailing in different regions, states in India are surveyed. This analysis will brings out the status of the infection in different parts of the country. It will also brings out the gapsin research field needed to be addressed and focussed on, thus attracting the helminthology community in this field to give more importance.

4. Present State:

In India, very less information are available in the public domain on the occurrence of the intracellular larval stages of trematode in molluscan host. Most of the published reportsare mainly the two medically important two flukes: *Paragonimus* and *Fasciola*. In this study, review is done on the reports of trematode larval stages in different molluscan host in different parts of the country. It is depicted in**table 1**. The data used in the study are available in the public domain. The papers that had reported intramolluscan larval stages are cited in the reference section.

From the analysis, it appears that different types of cercariae from different families are found infecting different snail host (table 1). So, there is high probability that many infected snail host are remain unexplored. The studies on the intramolluscan larval stages of trematode parasite in India are mainly resptricted in Rajasthan, Kerela, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, UP, MP, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Western Ghats, Malabar. But the studies on this aspects are also very limited. In some states of North east region of the country, native peoples consumed snails as their delicacy and also as a part of their customs, but no research or studies are available in the region. So, this need to be focus by the helminthologist and correlate with any trematode infection in the region.

5. Perspective:

Needed further research on the biology of the trematode, prevalence on the infection status, dominant parasite infection in the region. There are many untouched parameters in the parasite biology, their life cycle and the possible intermediate host which can serve as the intermediate host for SBPD. With this study, we can get the detailed biology of the life cycle of the parasites, and can even study the relation between the larval stages through in vitro studies. So far, no study has been carried out regarding the completes larval development in the lab. In present situation, there is limited information available regarding the SBPD although variety of snail species are available in the country and are also consumed as a food supplement. So, anextensive and detailed study of the biology of SBPDs and their relation with their intermediate hosts will help in understanding their geographical distribution and its expanding nature.

6. Conclusion

The present review on the larval stages in commonly edible freshwater snails host reveals that helminthologist have mainly focussed on only the cercarial spp. parasitizing the intermediate host in the Indian mainland. The most commonly reported cercaria include monostome, amhistome, echinostome, furcocercous, gymnocepahlous and xiphidiocercous. Studies are only restricted mainly in the mainland of the country, almost no information are available in several part of the country, north eastern states in particular. Also study on the biology of the larval stages and their association with the host are also lacking.It becomes prerequisite to get the baseline information on the probable snail intermediate host, types of parasites and transmission types. So the scientific community need to focus to study on the various aspects on the host parasite relationship, their intensity of damaged caused by the parasite. Importantly need for extensive studies for finding the infection prevalence in every regions of the country, if any.

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Table 1. Snail host infection with trematode larval stages from different parts of India.

Sr. No	Parasites	Larval Stage	Snail Host	localition	Reference
1	-A gymnocephalous cercaria, Cercaria johrii n. sp.	Cercaria	-*Melanoidestuberculatus*	Rajasthan (Fateh Sagar Lake, Udaipur)	43
2	- furcocercous - xiphidio, -monostome -gymnocephalous cercariae - sporocsyts contained numerous large sized active furcocercous cercariae	-Cercaria -Sporocyst	-*Melanoidestuberculatus*	-Rajasthan	44
3	-	-	-*Indoplanorbis*spp. -*Gyraulus*spp. -*Lymnaea* spp. - *Viviparas*pp	Jharkhand (Ranchi)	45
4	-*Fasciola gigantica*, -*Explanatumexplanatum*, -*Paramphistomum epiclitum*, -*Fischoederius elongatus* -*Schistosoma spindale*	Cercaria	-*Lymnaeaauricularia*, -*L. luteola*, -*Gyrausconvexiusculus* -*Indoplanorbisexustus*	-Uttar Pradesh (Meerut, Bareilly and Jhansi) - Madhya Pradesh (Jabalpur) - Jharkhand (Ranchi)	46
5	-Family: Transversotrematidae; transversotrematid cercaria; -Amphistome, - Echinostome,	cercaria	-*Melanoidesstriatella tuberculate* -pulmonate and operculate snails	Rajasthan (Udaipur)	47

	- monostome, - gymnocephalous, - furcocercous - xiphidiocercous				
6	- *Fasciola hepatica* - *Plagiorchisvespectilionis* - *Echinostome sp.* - *Pseudoechinoparyphium* sp. -*Trichobilharziaocellata* - *Diplostomumhepaticum*	Cercaria	- *Lymnaea acuminata*	Maharashtra, Aurangabad	48
7	Two new species of -furcocercous cercariae	Cercaria	-*Thiara tuberculata*	Kerala (Kozhikode and Malappuram)	49
8	Two new species of -furcocercous cercariae	Cercaria	-*Lymnealuteola* -*Gyraulusconvexiusculus*	Malabar	50
9	Two new species of -furcocercous cercariae	Cercaria	-*Indoplanorbisexustus* -*Thiara tuberculata*	Western Ghats (Wayanad region)	51
10	Two new cercaria - parapleurolophocercous cercaria -furcocercous cercaria	cercaria	-*Digoniostomapulchella* -*Indoplanorbisexustus*	Western Ghats (Wayanad region)	52
11	*Artyfechinostomum sufrartyfex*	metacercaria	-*Pila globosa*	Bihar	53
12	Four new species of virgulate xiphidiocercariae	Cercaria	- *Bithynia* (*Digoniostoma*) *pulchella*	Kerala (Malabar)	54
13	Echinostome	Cercaria	-*Indoplanorbisexustus* -*Lymnaealuteola*	Kerala (Palakkad)	55
14	Three new species of virgulate xiphidiocercariae	Cercaria	-*Bellamya bengalensis* -*Thiara tuberculata* -*Paracrostomahuegelii*	- Kerala (Malappuram) - Kerala (Wayanad)	56