

DISSERTATION / DISERTACIÓN

Underreporting: the situation of gastrointestinal and parasitic diseases in Mexico

Subnotificación: la situación de las enfermedades gastrointestinales y parasitarias en México

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Dissertation history:

Received 17 Dec 2022

Accepted 19 Dec 2022

Available online 30 Dec 2022

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Gastrointestinal diseases refer to disorders that affect the digestive system, including the esophagus, stomach, intestines, liver, gallbladder, and pancreas. Some common gastrointestinal diseases include gastritis, gastroenteritis, viral, bacterial or parasitic infections, peptic ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), and liver diseases such as hepatitis.

It is difficult to assess the exact situation of gastrointestinal diseases in Mexico due:

- a) potential underreporting and variations in healthcare access and
- b) deficient reporting systems.

Underreporting can occur for various reasons, including:

- a) limited access to healthcare,
- b) lack of awareness or education about gastrointestinal diseases,
- c) cultural factors, and
- d) inadequate surveillance systems.

However, some studies and reports have highlighted specific gastrointestinal diseases in Mexico. For example, a study published in 2018 reported a high prevalence of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) in Mexico, with an estimated prevalence rate of 16.7%. Another study published in 2017 found that the

prevalence of peptic ulcers in Mexico was around 6.5%.

In terms of infectious gastrointestinal diseases, such as gastroenteritis, Mexico has faced challenges in the past. Outbreaks of diseases like cholera, salmonellosis, and norovirus infections have been reported, particularly in areas with inadequate sanitation and water supply.

Parasitic gastrointestinal diseases are a significant public health concern in Mexico, with several common parasitic infections affecting the population. These infections can be caused by various parasites, including protozoa and helminths.

Here are some examples of parasitic gastrointestinal diseases in Mexico:

Amebiasis: Amebiasis is caused by the protozoan parasite *Entamoeba histolytica*. It can lead to diarrhea, abdominal pain, and in severe cases, liver abscesses. Mexico has reported cases of amebiasis, particularly in areas with poor sanitation and limited access to clean water.

Giardiasis: Giardiasis is caused by the protozoan parasite *Giardia lamblia*. It can cause diarrhea, abdominal cramps, bloating, and weight loss.

Mexico has reported cases of giardiasis, especially in rural areas with inadequate sanitation and hygiene practices.

Cryptosporidiosis: Cryptosporidiosis is caused by the protozoan parasite *Cryptosporidium* spp. It can result in severe diarrhea, abdominal pain, nausea, and vomiting. Mexico has reported cases of cryptosporidiosis, often associated with contaminated water sources and poor hygiene practices.

Ascariasis: Ascariasis is caused by the roundworm *Ascaris lumbricoides*. It can lead to intestinal obstruction, abdominal pain, and nutrient deficiencies. Mexico has reported cases of ascariasis, particularly in rural and impoverished areas with limited access to proper sanitation and hygiene facilities.

Trichuriasis: Trichuriasis is caused by the whipworm *Trichuris trichiura*. It can cause chronic diarrhea, abdominal pain, and anemia. Mexico has reported cases of trichuriasis, especially in areas with poor sanitation and hygiene practices.

Taeniasis/Cysticercosis: Taeniasis is caused by the tapeworm *Taenia solium*, while cysticercosis is the result of the larval form of the same parasite. Taeniasis can cause gastrointestinal symptoms, while cysticercosis can lead to neurologic manifestations. Mexico has reported cases of both taeniasis and cysticercosis, particularly in regions where pork consumption and inadequate food preparation practices are prevalent.

It is important to note that efforts are made in Mexico to improve surveillance, prevention, and treatment of parasitic gastrointestinal diseases. These include public health campaigns promoting hygiene practices, access to clean water, proper sanitation facilities, and deworming programs to reduce the burden of these infections.

For the most up-to-date and detailed information on the prevalence and specific measures taken to address parasitic gastrointestinal diseases in Mexico, I recommend consulting reports and studies from reputable health organizations such as the Secretaría de Salud (Ministry of Health) of Mexico or the National Institute of Public Health (Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública).

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