

Prevención de la infección por *Toxoplasma gondii* en la unidad materno-infantil. Revisión y Síntesis

Martín, Ubaldo O. ^(x); Francioni, Ana M.; Paez Allende de, Gloria; Merediz, Mirta L.

^(x) U. O. Martín: Centro de Investigaciones sobre Endemias Nacionales.

Facultad de Bioquímica y Ciencias Biológicas - Paraje "El Pozo" - Ciudad Universitaria (3000) - Santa Fe - Argentina.

RESUMEN: La infección por *Toxoplasma gondii* es la antropozoonosis más difundida del planeta. Uno de los problemas más preocupantes de la infección en humanos, es la prevención en la embarazada y su descendencia. La estrategia de control de la Toxoplasmosis congénita es controvertida en Argentina y en el mundo. Identificar los factores de riesgo en la unidad de análisis materno-infantil es una meta relevante en cualquier programa de control.

Los objetivos de este trabajo son: a) puntualizar claramente, en función del proceso salud - infección - enfermedad, los distintos niveles de prevención; b) comprender en cuál de ellos son más útiles los estudios inmunoserológicos de laboratorio; c) proponer un algoritmo de estos estudios, utilizable en la unidad materno-infantil por el Sistema de Atención Médica, considerando las posibilidades tecnológicas de acuerdo a resultados propios y de la bibliografía internacional; d) destacar algunos avances importantes en el conocimiento de esta patología infecciosa en los últimos años; e) contribuir al esfuerzo para reducir los niveles de carga parasitaria en humanos y en los alimentos.

SUMMARY: The infection caused by *Toxoplasma gondii* is one of the most widely spread antropozoonosis on earth. The prevention strategy of congenital Toxoplasmosis remains a controversial issue in Argentina and ind the world.

One of the most worrying points about this infection in human beings is its prevention in pregnant women and their descendants. Findings support that the use of preventive measures, including serologic screening of pregnant women and prenatal treatment are very important. Also, research data suggest that the early treatment and regular examination of children improve the outcome of congenital toxoplasmosis. Within these prevention strategies, the serological tests currently available for toxoplasmosis are considered acceptable because of their serodiagnosis.

Moreover, to identify the risk factors of maternal infection is a relevant aspect in any program of prevention of congenital toxoplasmosis. Health education, in this sense, becomes a question of major importance to clarify the significance of cultural habits and behavioral risk factors such as personal hygiene, kitchen hygiene, food handling practices, cooking preferences, and cat contact patterns.

The aims of this work are: a) To give a detailed account of the different levels of prevention, taking in consideration the health-infection-illness process. b) To clarify in which of these levels the lab immunoserologic studies are most useful. c) To provide an algorithm from these studies to assess the benefits of serologic screening for the detection and treatment of acute *Toxoplasma* infection in pregnant women. This algorithm will be usable in the maternal-infantile unit by the Medical Care System, considering the technological possibilities and taking into account my own results and international bibliography. d) To point out the importance of the risk factors which will most likely have the greatest impact on the incidence of *Toxoplasma* infection in pregnancy. e) To highlight some of the latest findings on the knowledge of this pathological infection. f) To provide a basis for specific control and prevention strategy. g) To contribute measures needed to reduce the levels of parasites in food and humans.