



Case Report

An Itch from a Back Yard Pool

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Abstract

Swimmer's itch, also called cercarial dermatitis, is a common but not a so well recognized disease as recently reviewed by Horák (2015). It appears as a skin rash caused by an allergic reaction to certain parasites that infect some birds and mammals. Swimmer's itch is found throughout the world and is more frequent during summer months. Most cases of swimmer's itch do not require medical attention. In this case report, we present an unusual infection route.

Keywords: cercarial dermatitis, swimmer's itch, infection route

Introduction and case presentation

On a warm late summer holiday, a family with four children decided to make their own aquarium to the back yard and collected small fish and water snails from a nearby lake to a small pool. On the next day, all children suffered from itching on their hands and legs. Antihistamines and topical corticosteroids were used to control the itch and the pool was emptied.

Discussion and conclusion

Cercarial dermatitis, also referred as swimmer's itch is especially common in children but only a few cases have been reported via contact with an aquarium, as

described by Fölster-Holst (2001). The diagnosis is made by observing the maculopapular skin eruptions affecting areas exposed to water.

During late summer, cercarial dermatitis is a relatively common disease. The primary hosts, mainly water birds, excrete parasitic eggs in their faeces. In water, the larvae hatch from the eggs and penetrate aquatic snails, which serve as intermediate hosts, studied by González (1989). The snails release cercariae, which are able to infect water birds again. Cercariae die within few hours in human epidermis, but skin eruption may last for two weeks.



Figure 1: Four brothers share a papulous and itching rash

References

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