

## **Strongyloides Stercoralis Infection in Hispanic Veterans Living in Puerto Rico: A Tropical Issue or a Global One? P R Health Sci J 2021;40(4):174-179**

Dear Dr. Wojna:

I am writing regarding an excellent article published by Javier Serra Franco, et al, about strongyloides stercoralis infections in Hispanics Veterans living in Puerto Rico ([Strongyloides Stercoralis Infection in Hispanic Veterans Living in Puerto Rico: A Tropical Issue or a Global One? P R Health Sci J 2021;40\(4\):174-179](#)). It is a very good paper, and the global outlook it presents is quite important.

I would like to add to the discussion a paper published by our group when our Transplant Program was based at the Veterans Administration Hospital, and which was published in the Puerto Rico Medical Association Bulletin in April 1982, Volume 74, Number 4, pages 134-135 (<https://archive.org/details/boletindelaasoci7416asoc/page/134/mode/2up>).

Our article was about strongyloidiasis in the immunosuppressed host, and it presented a case of a transplant recipient with abdominal pain, distension, and vomiting post kidney transplantation. That patient, being immunosuppressed after transplantation, did not tolerate a massive pulmonary migration by strongyloides. The issue here was that overwhelming generalized infection with strongyloides can be unsuspected and not detected in the lung, although perhaps eosinophilia could have been an alerting sign. The patient had a massive pulmonary invasion and succumbed to the infection. A discussion ensued.

Strongyloidiasis although not necessarily lethal in the normal population, can be deadly in an immunosuppressed patient.

Thank you considering these commentaries on a very important tropical condition.

Sincerely,

**Eduardo A. Santiago Delpín, MD, MS, FACS,**  
Distinguished Professor University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus

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## **REPLY**

Dear Editors,

I am writing in response to a letter to the editor from Dr. Eduardo A. Santiago Delpín, MD, MS, FACS regarding our article titled “Strongyloides stercoralis infection in Hispanic Veterans Living in Puerto Rico: A tropical or a Global Issue”.

We appreciate and acknowledge Dr. Santiago Delpín comments. The main aim of our study was to describe the myriad of clinical manifestations of this parasitic infection and bring awareness to our scientific community of the clinical presentation and outcomes.

Strongyloides infection may be asymptomatic; but when symptoms are present, these may vary from mild non-specific complaints to serious life-threatening multiple organ involvement as described by Dr. Santiago Delpín. In our study we identified 5 cases with hyperinfection, which represented 2% of the studied population. Table 2 described the 5 cases and the pre-existent conditions. In four of the 5 cases the trigger for dissemination was the use of corticosteroids. Our study reveals the importance of testing patients for the presence of this usually silent and unrecognized pathogen, in particular those that are in immunocompromised or will receive immunosuppressive drugs such as corticosteroids.

Cases, as the one published by Dr. Santiago Delpín in 1982, were the motivation and the inspiration for our study.

Sincerely,

**Doris H. Toro, MD, FACP, AGAF, FACP,**  
VA Caribbean Health Care System

## Obesity and Hypertension in School Children of Puerto Rico *P R Health Sci J* 2021;40(1):45-49

Dear Dr. Wojna:

I enjoyed very much the article by Dr. Hector Santiago and collaborators that appeared in Puerto Rico Health Sciences Journal (*Obesity and Hypertension in School Children of Puerto Rico P R Health Sci J. 2021 Mar;40(1):45-49*). The article dwelled in obesity and hypertension in school children in Puerto Rico and reported the very important observation that almost 30% percent are obese, and that 9.9% percent were hypertensive.

This should alert the pediatricians that obesity is not benign at all and that it can cause hypertension with its attending problems.

I would like to add to this discussion our article, which appeared in Volume 74, Number 12 of Puerto Rico Medical Association Bulletin, pages 376-379, published in 1982, forty years ago (<https://archive.org/details/boletindelaasoci7471asoc/page/375/mode/2up>). Our article alerted the medical authorities that hypertension was a very important issue. We presented a total of 1,009 observations in total sample of 9,000 subjects that was done, if I recall correctly at a shopping mall in March 1982. We performed detail statistical analyses including contingency table analysis, simple regression, a slope and intercept analysis and t-test for an independent sample. Of the group of 9,000 subjects, we included a total of 125 children, and of those, 25, that is 20 %, had hypertension. These included four children below the age of five. These findings are of concern and should be added to the observations of the current study.

Having worked the great majority of my life in organ transplantation, we are fully cognizant of the problem caused by hypertension in children and in adults, being the major cause, together with diabetes, of end-stage renal disease in Puerto Rico.

I hope that you can publish this letter because our article was not referred to in Dr. Hector Santiago's study, and the problem is ongoing.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

**Eduardo A. Santiago Delpín, MD, MS, FACS,**

Distinguished Professor University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus

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## REPLY

Dear Dr. Wojna:

We appreciate the letter sent by Dr. Eduardo Santiago Delpín about our article on Obesity and Hypertension in School Children in Puerto Rico.

We acknowledge the important contribution of Dr. Santiago in his publication on the Boletín de la Asociación Médica de Puerto Rico in 1982. The paper presented the results of a 1-day screening of 1,009 subjects in a shopping mall. The sample included 125 children (1 to 16 years old), out of which 25 (20%) were hypertensive. The 95% confidence interval of the prevalence of hypertension in this small sample of children extends from 13.9% to 27.9%. As a convenience sample, it was not necessarily representative of the children of Puerto Rico.

Our sample consisted of 3,145 children aged 5 to 17 from seven educational areas in Puerto Rico. The prevalence of hypertension was 9.9%, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 8.9% to 11.0%. Our results are a more accurate estimation of the prevalence of hypertension among schoolchildren in Puerto Rico due to our larger sample size, the wider geographical distribution of participants, and the weighting with census data.

Both studies indicate that childhood hypertension is a significant health issue in Puerto Rico. It is a call to all healthcare professionals to work together to identify these children and refer them on time for proper diagnosis and treatment.

Sincerely,

**Héctor Santiago, PhD, OD, FFAO,**

Professor and Director of Research, Inter American University of Puerto Rico