

# Serious Consideration of Parasitic Infections during the COVID-19

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## Dear Editor,

This highlights the significance of parasitic infections as an important and overlooked aspect of infectious diseases amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the focus on viral and bacterial infections, parasitic infections continue to pose a substantial public health challenge, especially in areas with restricted access to healthcare. The interaction between parasitic infections and COVID-19, including possible co-infections and their impact on disease severity, requires further investigation.<sup>1</sup>

Recent studies have suggested that individuals with chronic parasitic infections may exhibit altered immune responses, which could influence their susceptibility to or recovery from COVID-19. Additionally, the disruption of healthcare services during the pandemic has likely led to underdiagnosis and undertreatment of parasitic diseases, exacerbating their burden on vulnerable populations.

An example of this issue can be seen in the early symptoms of toxoplasmosis, which shares similarities with COVID-19. In its initial stages, toxoplasmosis can present with lymphadenopathy (swollen lymph nodes), fever, and general malaise symptoms that overlap with early COVID-19 manifestations.<sup>2</sup> This similarity may lead to misdiagnosis or delays in appropriate treatment. Similarly, infections such as *Lophomonas* spp can involve severe pulmonary complications, mimicking COVID-19 pneumonia, thereby complicating differential diagnosis and management.<sup>3</sup>

Given these concerns, I strongly encourage the

medical and scientific community to incorporate surveillance for parasitic infections into their COVID-19 management plans. By implementing enhanced screening, improved public health interventions, and further research on co-infections, we can gain valuable insights that may lead to improved patient outcomes. I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this important discussion and commend the journal for facilitating and fostering such critical discourse.

## Conflict of Interest Disclosures

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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