LETTERS

STRONGYLOIDES STERCORALIS INFECTION

Simply wearing footwear could interrupt transmission of *Strongyloides stercoralis*

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Greaves and colleagues provide a valuable overview of the pathophysiology, clinical manifestations, and current approaches to the diagnosis and treatment of *Strongyloides stercoralis* infection.¹ Inexplicably they do not mention the measures needed to interrupt the transmission cycle by ensuring that faeces are disposed of safely. Possibly this is the result of embarrassment at our tardy global progress towards meeting the sanitation component of millennium development goal number 7.

The World Health Organization seems to have thrown its arms up in despair with a defeatist: “No public health strategies for controlling the disease are active at the global level.”² It is therefore hardly surprising that some consider this soil transmitted helminth infection to be the most neglected of neglected tropical diseases, infecting up to 100 million people worldwide.³

Preventive chemotherapy approaches are now being advocated, but are we overlooking the obvious? Time honoured public health tradition argues that the cycle of transmission could be interrupted by simply wearing footwear. This has been supported by compelling scientific evidence from high risk environments.^{4,5}

The considerable recent investment in diagnostic and therapeutic research into neglected tropical diseases should extend to providing culturally appropriate education and protective footwear in high risk communities.

Competing interests: None declared.

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