ABSTRACT

Intestinal helminths infections are of major concern in most developing countries where HIV/AIDS cases are endemic. HIV infection has increased the susceptibility of the host to these infections with dire consequences. The introduction of antiretroviral drugs has reduced the prevalence of intestinal helminths infections. However, patients who have low CD4 count still harbour these intestinal parasites. While several studies have investigated the occurrences of intestinal helminths infection among patients on HAART, very little is known of these neglected tropical intestinal parasites in the North-central region of Nigeria. This study was undertaken to determine the pattern of intestinal helminths infection among HIV-positive adult patients on HAART and to identify risk factors that increase their susceptibility to these parasites.

A cross sectional study was carried out at Heart to Heart clinic in which one stool sample was collected from each of three hundred and ten patients and was analyzed by wet mount preparation and the concentration method. A structured questionnaire was administered to collect data of socio-demographic and associated risk factors. Data was entered and analysed using EPI INFO software and logistic regression was used to assess any association between explanatory factors and outcome variable.

The prevalence of intestinal helminth infection was 10.3%. *Ascaris lumbricodes* accounted for 65.6%, hookworm 21.9% and *Strongyloides stercoralis* accounted for the remaining 12.5%. The main risk factors that predispose patients to intestinal helminths infection include severe immune deficiency state (CD4<200 cell/mm³), lack of standard toilet facility, poor hand washing hygiene, lack of safe drinking water and being a farmer. Predictor of intestinal helminths infection in this study was poor hand washing hygiene (OR 2.44)
HIV-infected patients are prone to intestinal helminths infection, despite being on ART. This is more glaring among those who do not have access to portable drinking and good toilet facilities. Severe immune deficiency is also a risk factor for this infec