lection on the basis of sex, race, or socioeconomic class.

No effective means for prevention are currently available. Pinworm infection per se should not be considered evidence of poor hygiene. Any exaggerated attempts to eradicate the infection in the household should be discouraged by a rational discussion to allay anxiety.

References


2. Trichuris trichiura (Linnaeus 1771)

*Trichuris trichiura*, popularly known as whipworm because of its characteristic shape, is distributed throughout the world in the same areas where *Ascaris* and hookworm are found. It is estimated that there are at present some 800 million infections.

There are no reservoir hosts for *T. trichiura*, but other species of *Trichuris* are found in a wide range of mammals (e.g., *T. vulpis* in the dog; *T. muris* in the mouse; *T. suis* in the pig). Host specificity is the rule, but one case of *T. vulpis* in a child has been reported.

Children usually harbor a larger number of whipworms in the intestinal tract than do adults, and consequently *Trichuris* infections are usually more severe in children.1 Heavily infected children often go on to develop colitis and growth stunting.1 Deaths have also been reported in children.

Historical Information

Linnaeus, in 1771, classified this organism as a nematode, then called “teretes.” In 1740 Morgagni2 described the location of *T. trichiura* in the cecum and transverse colon. This description was followed by an accurate report in 1761 by Roederer3 of the external morphology of *T. trichiura*. Roederer’s report was accompanied by drawings that are considered accurate by current standards. Human infection with *Trichuris* has been identified in coprolites of prehistoric humans.

Life Cycle

The adult worms (Figs. 2.1 and 2.2) live in the transverse and descending colon. The anterior
Trichuris trichiura

Eggs are ingested

Eggs embryonate in soil

Unembryonated eggs pass out in feces

Larvae hatch in small intestine

Larvae migrate to colon

Adults mature in colon

PATHOLOGY

Prolapsed rectum