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TITLE

HEALTH EDUCATION AND PROMOTION WITH A FOCUS ON THE PRODUCTION OF A BOOKLET ON SCHISTOSOMIASIS: CASE REPORT

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ABSTRACT

Schistosomiasis is a parasitic disease caused by *Schistosoma mansoni*, with a high prevalence in rural areas and regions with poor sanitation in Brazil, including the city of Itabuna, in the state of Bahia. Schistosomiasis control depends on integrated interventions, which include treatment of infected individuals, improvements in basic sanitation, and health education strategies. In this context, the development of educational materials is essential to inform the population about disease prevention measures. This report describes the creation of an educational booklet with the objective of promoting knowledge about schistosomiasis. A public health team, composed of physicians, nurses, community health agents, and educators, identified a high prevalence of schistosomiasis in riverside communities in the city of Itabuna. Given this scenario, the development of a booklet with accessible language was proposed, aiming to improve the understanding of the local population. The booklet was developed in partnership with the Municipal Health Department, based on guidelines from the Ministry of Health and recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO) for controlling parasitic diseases. The content was prepared in a simple and objective manner, covering: what schistosomiasis is, its transmission cycle, preventive measures and treatment. In addition to the text content, the booklet was illustrated with colored images to facilitate understanding, especially among functionally illiterate people or people with low levels of education. The material was distributed in schools, health units and during home visits made by community agents. Educational lectures and workshops were also held in schools and community centers, where the material was used to engage the population. In addition, practical activities were promoted, such as demonstrations on the importance of using treated water and recognizing snail breeding sites. After the booklet was distributed and educational activities were carried out, there was a greater awareness among the community about the risks and ways to prevent schistosomiasis. Community agents reported an increase in adherence to preventive practices, such as the use of treated water and seeking treatment at health facilities. Epidemiological monitoring indicated a significant reduction in the incidence of new cases in the region, suggesting that the health education strategy had a positive impact on disease control. The creation and distribution of an educational booklet on schistosomiasis prevention in Itabuna proved to be an effective health promotion tool. The combination of accessible educational material and practical activities contributed to changing community behavior, reinforcing the importance of health education in controlling endemic diseases. This approach can be replicated in other regions affected by schistosomiasis, promoting greater awareness and engagement of the population in combating the disease.

KEYWORDS

Control; Population; Riverside Dwellers; Public Health.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

