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TITLE

ASSOCIATION OF PLAYFUL AND SCIENTIFIC APPROACHES AS A STRATEGY FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH PROMOTION IN SCHISTOSOMIASIS MANSONI AWARENESS

AUTHORS

Vasco, E.M.*¹; Souza, C.E.R.¹; Santos, L.R.O.¹; Souza, N.A.¹; Silva, N.N.¹; Cruz, R.S.¹; Silva, R.B.¹; Belo, V.R.M.¹; Amor, A.L.M.¹

AFFILIATIONS

¹ Center for Health Sciences - Federal University of Recôncavo of Bahia

ABSTRACT

Schistosomiasis mansoni is a parasitic infection caused by *Schistosoma mansoni*. Its high prevalence in Brazil justifies the need for health education initiatives aimed at prevention, recognizing the importance of empowering individuals and promoting health in a holistic manner. Playful elements are essential, as they facilitate learning in an innovative, stimulating, and engaging way. The creation of three-dimensional models representing the parasite's life cycle using biscuit clay serves as an effective tool, allowing participants to handle the pieces while explaining the life cycle, transmission, prevention, and diagnosis of the disease. This approach enhances understanding and makes learning more engaging. The use of this educational technology improves knowledge retention, transforming participants into agents of health education. The objective of this study is to highlight the relevance of playful methods in building and disseminating knowledge about schistosomiasis mansoni and its prevention, demonstrating how these approaches make it easier to understand the parasite's life cycle, captivating participants in a more interactive way. Several resources were utilized in setting up an exhibition stand as the action site, incorporating it into health and knowledge fairs to make the educational experience more interactive. The resources included an informational banner displaying epidemiological data, biscuit models representing the *S. mansoni* life cycle, a microscope for viewing slides containing eggs, cercariae, adult worms, and liver tissue with schistosomal granulomas, as well as *Biomphalaria* snails and a gamified quiz to assess participants' knowledge. The activities at the stand engaged spectators in various ways. The banner provided a technical approach with epidemiological data, while the biscuit models allowed for hands-on learning during explanations of the life cycle, prevention, and pathophysiology of schistosomiasis, making the learning process more engaging. Specific details, such as the lateral spine of *S. mansoni* eggs and its importance in identifying the parasite in stool samples, were emphasized. The visualization of different life stages under the microscope reinforced the understanding of the disease's pathophysiology. The event concluded with a gamified quiz to test participants' knowledge, adding a fun and stimulating aspect to the learning experience. The use of playful tools as pedagogical instruments proved effective in health education about schistosomiasis mansoni, facilitating the visualization and understanding of the parasite's life cycle in an interactive and accessible manner. The three-dimensional model complemented other pedagogical methods, such as banners, slides, and a board game. This study demonstrates that innovative techniques can enhance the understanding of complex concepts and can be replicated for other diseases and educational contexts, broadening the impact of health education.

KEYWORDS

Health education; Methodology; *Schistosoma mansoni*; Educational Technology; Prevention

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