

Dientamoeba fragilis and giardia lamblia - Comparison of clinical picture of the two protozoan

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Background

Despite the worldwide distribution of the enteroparasite *Dientamoeba fragilis*, its clinical picture remains unclear. We conducted a retrospective study to compare the clinical pictures of *Dientamoeba fragilis* and *Giardia lamblia*, two most common intestinal protozoan commonly seen in travellers.

Methods

We collected information on the demographics, travel history and symptoms of *Dientamoeba* and *Giardia* cases from the Helsinki Metropolitan area between 2007 and 2012 by retrospectively visiting the patient records.

Results

We will present the symptoms and travel history of patients diagnosed with one of the two most common protozoan in Finland. Diarrhea and/or loose stools and abdominal pain were the most common symptoms in both groups. Loose stools, stomach pain and a chronic course of the disease were more common in the *Dientamoeba* group where as watery diarrhea, fever and nausea were more typical in the *Giardia* group. 44 % of patients in the *Dientamoeba* and 66 % of patients in the *Giardia* group had a positive travel history.

Conclusions

A chronic course with abdominal pain and loose stools seem to be a characteristic more typical to *dientamoebiasis* than *giardiasis*. Diagnostics of the returning traveler's chronic abdominal complaints should also include tests for *dientamoebiasis*.