

Myths and Beliefs about the Acquisition of Taeniasis and Cysticercosis amongst the Xhosa University Students in South Africa

M. Mathews, K.J. Mammen and M. Mammen

Walter Sisulu University, Nelson Mandela Drive, Mthatha, South Africa

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ABSTRACT The main inhabitants of the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa are the Xhosa people. Myths and beliefs are part of every culture. This paper focuses on the myths about the acquisition of Cysticercosis and Taeniasis amongst the Xhosa university students in the field of health promotion. The research was a cross-sectional survey. A convenience sample was used. The sample was a group of students in one class, an intact group. Data were collected through a questionnaire from the first year Health Promotion Education (HPE) class in the Faculty of Health Sciences at a public university in South Africa. This university is geographically located in the tribal land of the Xhosa people. Although the population consisted of 70 first year HPE students, only 66 students voluntarily took part in the study: 19 males and 47 females. The data were manually analysed and percentages were computed. The results indicated that there were several myths and beliefs about the acquisition of Cysticercosis and Taeniasis amongst the Xhosa people. These myths were highly entrenched in the belief system and the students brought these myths and beliefs to the university. Such myths and beliefs were found to hinder the acquisition of scientific knowledge about the ways in which Cysticercosis and Taeniasis are contracted. Inclusion of scientifically correct ideas in school curricula and training health educators with scientifically correct conceptions and their active role in eradicating myths in villages ought to be considered as a matter of priority.