

A Comparative Study Of The Nutritional Status, Parasitic Infections And Health Of Male Roadworkers In Four Areas Of Kenya

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Abstract:

The nutritional status, parasitic infections and general health of 801 male roadworkers living in four different areas of Kenya, namely, the highlands, coastal lowlands, Lake Victoria basin and the semiarid north-west, were investigated. Undernutrition was common in all areas but was most marked among men in the semi-arid area. Anaemia was most prevalent in the coastal lowlands where 41% of men had a haemoglobin level less than 13.0 g/dl. Hookworm eggs were seen in the faeces of 40% of all men and in 69% of samples collected in the coastal lowlands. The Lake Victoria basin was a significant focus of infection with *Schistosoma mansoni*, 51% of faecal samples containing its eggs; *S. haematobium* also occurred but was most common in the coastal lowlands. Stages of *Plasmodium* spp. were most commonly observed in blood smears collected from men near Lake Victoria and the coast, two significant foci of malaria. An analysis of variance was used to examine the relationship between variables and indicated that the most significant association was between hookworm infections and low haemoglobin levels