Abstract

Introduction. Previous research has demonstrated the presence of Paragonimus spp. in crabs of three municipalities located in the Medellín river basin. To design a plan for the control and prevention of paragonimosis, parasite presence must be demonstrated in the upper area of the river, and an awareness campaign of its risks must involve the participation of the educational community in focusing attention on the local aquatic resources. Objective. The presence of Paragonimus spp. metacercariae was established in freshwater crabs from La Miel and La Clara streams, and an awareness campaign created public awareness to management of the aquatic ecosystems for risk reduction. Materials and methods. Nine crabs were collected from streams of La Miel and La Clara villages in 2007 and 2008. The crabs were identified, sacrificed in the laboratory and examined for presence of Paragonimus spp. metacercariae. Five workshops were conducted with students of educational institutions of the two villages to improve the student perception of paragonimosis risks associated with the local streams. Results. The crabs were identified as Hypolobocera bouvieri. One crab was found with Paragonimus spp. in La Miel. A mollusk, Aroapyrgus colombiensis, another host of the parasite was found in La Clara. That aquatic ecosystems are a great attraction for the local was well established. Conclusions. Foci of Paragonimus spp. flatworms are present in the upper area of Medellín river which includes Caldas. However, local school children were uninformed about the risk of paragonimosis associated with the local aquatic ecosystem. Therefore this province must be included in programs for prevention and control of paragonimosis. The prevalence of this disease recommends educational programs that promote awareness of local aquatic ecosystems and their parasitic inhabitants.

Keywords
Paragonimus spp., aquatic environment, education, health.