

study, significantly higher values in RBC, Hb and Hct were noted in infected workers.²⁰ Moreover, no significant difference in the nutritional status was noted between laborers with 1 or more species and those without infection. One possible explanation for this discrepancy is that these laborers were selected as healthy, asymptomatic adults, when applying for construction work in Taiwan. Although many of them had parasitic infections, their worm burdens were probably low, and therefore the laborers were deemed fit in the general health examination. As a result, the influence of parasitic infections on their nutritional status was minimal.

Eosinophilia is generally a manifestation of helminth infections. In the present study, we observed no significantly higher percentage of eosinophils in the infected laborers (42.3%) compared with those without parasites (47.2%). However, 44% of the laborers had a high level of eosinophils ($> 400/\text{mm}^3$). It is possible that many of the laborers had received treatment for parasitic infections just prior to their departure. Although these parasitic infections may have been eradicated, the eosinophilia persisted. Although hookworm infection and strongyloidiasis may induce marked eosinophilia ($> 3000 \text{ u/l}$) during early larval migration, as do liver flukes during early infection, eosinophilia may be absent in prolonged infections.²¹

Elevated levels of antibodies (IgG, IgA, IgM) against adult worms of *O. viverrini* have been reported to persist for over 1 year following curative treatment with praziquantel.^{22,23} We found a significantly high level of IgE in infected laborers. This finding is consistent with reports that IgE elevation is frequently associated with helminthic infections.²⁴

Although intestinal parasitic infections have been reported to influence the nutritional status of the human host, we did not observe this phenomenon in the present study. However, the finding that parasitic infections are prevalent among Thai laborers demonstrates the need for a strict screening of parasite infections in foreign laborers coming to work in Taiwan.

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