

where both are co-endemic. The test is performed by intradermal inoculation of 0.01 to 0.1 ml of the test antigen (saline extract or purified antigen of adult *P. westermani*) on the volar aspect of the forearm, and the wheal diameters are measured immediately and 15 min after the inoculation. A differential wheal diameter of  $\geq 5$  mm with erythema and pseudopodia indicates a positive test. Exceptionally, a large erythema of  $\geq 45 \times 35$  mm in diameters without an appreciable wheal and pseudopodia may indicate a positive reaction. Whereas a negative skin test almost certainly rules out paragonimiasis, a positive test cannot differentiate between the past and the present infection as the test may remain positive as long as 10 to 20 years even after the successful chemotherapy or spontaneous recovery<sup>86</sup>. There is also possible cross-reaction with other trematode infections such as schistosomiasis and clonorchiasis, if a crude antigen is used. However, the sensitivity and specificity of the test can be up to 100 per cent by using purified antigen<sup>87</sup>.

CFT has been used in the diagnosis of active infection and to confirm ID positive cases. The test becomes negative within 3 to 9 months after successful treatment<sup>87</sup>. It was recommended that ID test where used should be applied first in the epidemiological survey and followed by CFT or any other more specific test on individuals who showed positive or doubtful dermal reactions.

Biguet *et al*<sup>87</sup> first developed the immunodiffusion method for the diagnosis of paragonimiasis. Double immunodiffusion technique (Ouchterloney method), immunoelectrophoresis, and counter-current immunoelectrophoresis were reported to be highly sensitive and specific and can be used for speciation by demonstration of specific precipitin bands<sup>88-90</sup>. IHA is another simple, rapid and sensitive test. In Thailand, the test revealed a sensitivity of 88 per cent in the diagnosis of paragonimiasis heterotremas<sup>91</sup>.

ELISA test for paragonimiasis was first developed by Quicho *et al* in Thailand<sup>92</sup>. Since then ELISA based on different techniques and with different antigen preparations have been developed and evaluated for diagnosis of paragonimiasis<sup>93-96</sup>. The overall specificity of IgG ELISA using the saline extract of adult worms as an antigen was found to be 97 per cent. A 100 per cent sensitivity and specificity could be obtained in an indirect ELISA using F1 antigen fraction to detect antibody against *P. heterotremus* infection<sup>97</sup>. The various antigenic components such as 27 kDa possibly excretory/secretory (E/S) products of *P. westermani*<sup>98</sup> and 31.5 kDa substance of *P. heterotremus* were used

as antigens for specific diagnosis of paragonimiasis and for serodiagnosis of human paragonimiasis heterotremas and therapeutic evaluation of praziquantel therapy<sup>99</sup>, both by ELISA and Western blot, respectively. An enzyme-linked immunoelectrotransfer blot was developed for differential diagnosis between *P. heterotremus* and *P. westermani* infections<sup>100</sup>. Other ELISA techniques are sandwich ELISA using monoclonal antibodies-based antigen detection assay<sup>101</sup> and multiple dot-ELISA<sup>95</sup> now used in Japan. Generally, ELISA tests are used to detect parasite specific IgG antibodies but the detection of specific IgE antibodies was proven to reduce cross-reactions with other trematode infections and detection of parasite specific IgM antibodies was recommended in the diagnosis of infection at the early stage<sup>102,103</sup>. In India, Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC, ICMR), Dibrugarh had developed IgG ELISA using E/S antigen for diagnosis of paragonimiasis and was reported to be highly sensitive and specific<sup>104</sup>. The ELISA tests are now most widely used for serological diagnosis of paragonimiasis due to their high sensitivity and specificity. The tests are also applicable to mass screening. However, ELISA tests are more expensive, time-consuming and require costly equipment and experienced persons and all the reagents, antigens, in particular, are not commercially available.

**Rapid test:** Recently, dot-immunogold filtration assay (DIGFA) kit was developed in China for anti-*P. westermani* antibody detection. This is found to be simple and rapid and does not require any special devices and/or experienced technicians and the results are obtained within 10 min. This kit was prepared using *P. westermani* antigen and reported in China to have the sensitivity and specificity up to 99 and 92 per cent, respectively<sup>105</sup>.

#### Haematological investigation

Leucocytosis with relative lymphocytosis, eosinophilia and increased ESR were common findings in patients with paragonimiasis<sup>33</sup>. Most patients have haemoglobin value within normal limits in spite of frequent spitting of blood and recurrent haemoptysis. Eosinophilia (absolute eosinophil count  $>1000/\mu\text{l}$ ) and increased ESR upto 104 mm at the end of 1<sup>st</sup> h (Westergren) were consistently found in children with paragonimiasis in Manipur<sup>35</sup>.

#### X-rays and other imaging technique

The common radiographic findings were patchy air-space consolidation or opacity with associated pleural reaction or thickening, cystic or cavitory lesions, pleural

effusion (usually bilateral) and nodular opacities, which were difficult to differentiate from the similar lesions of tubercular origin. The chest radiographs showed patchy consolidations in 62-71 per cent, pleural thickening in 28 per cent, cystic or cavitory lesions in 11-14 per cent, effusion in 9-10 per cent, and nodular lesions in 8-13 per cent<sup>33-35</sup>. Persistent pleural effusion in nine patients was reported from Lao PDR of whom in 44.4 per cent patients showed bilateral effusion<sup>69</sup>. Compared to the chest X-ray, computerized tomography (CT) was found as a better technique for visualization of the lesions in the lungs<sup>106</sup>. Burrows and tunnels joining the cystic lesions have been described in broncho-tomogram or pulmonary CT<sup>107,108</sup>. Chest radiographs may be normal in symptomatic patients<sup>31,32</sup>. Higher rate of normal chest roentgenograms in pulmonary paragonimiasis was also reported from endemic areas in Nigeria<sup>109</sup>. CT and MRI of brain of cerebral paragonimiasis patients will show conglomerates of multiple ring-shaped shadows called the 'grape cluster' or 'soap bubble appearance'<sup>110,111</sup> or isodense lesion mimicking tuberculoma<sup>77</sup> in one hemisphere of the cerebral cortex.

### Treatment

Three major antihelminthic drugs are currently available for treatment of paragonimiasis. Praziquantel is the drug of choice for both pulmonary and extra pulmonary paragonimiasis<sup>112</sup>. The recommended dose is 25 mg/kg body weight administered orally three times a day after meals for three days without any appreciable side effects. With this regimen relapse occurred in about 2 per cent cases. A 100 per cent cure rate was obtained when the therapy was extended up to 5 days<sup>34</sup>. Bithionol, 2, 2'-thiobis [4, 6-dichlorophenol] was the drug used before the praziquantel was available for the treatment of paragonimiasis. It is given in doses of 40 mg/kg body weight in two equally divided doses on alternate days for a course of 10 to 20 doses<sup>33</sup>. The most common side effect was urticaria, which was observed in about 50 per cent of patients after 2 or 3 doses of bithionol. Rarely, urticaria may be very severe requiring hospitalization and parenteral antihistaminics. The other side effects such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and itching were generally few, mild and transitory. Zhong *et al*<sup>113</sup> had used bithionol to treat paragonimiasis in doses of 50 mg/kg body weight per day on alternate days for 20 doses and found a cure rate of 97.1 per cent. Recently, triclabendazole {5-chloro-6 (2,3-dichlorophenoxy)-2methylthio benzimidazole}, a drug used in veterinary medicine was evaluated for the treatment of paragonimiasis in humans. Control trials

have shown that triclabendazole when administered in a single dosage of 10 mg/kg body weight had comparable efficacy, safety and tolerability with praziquantel<sup>114,115</sup>.

### Conclusion

In the recent years, paragonimiasis has emerged as an important food-borne parasitic disease in India, mainly in the Northeastern States of India. Failure to recognize pulmonary paragonimiasis has resulted in over diagnosis of pulmonary tuberculosis and unwarranted antitubercular therapy, which will have a negative impact on the outcome of the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme, especially in the tuberculosis endemic areas. Mahajan emphasized the need to generate awareness among the clinicians and public regarding paragonimiasis and to consider this disease in the differential diagnosis of PTB in places where both co-exist<sup>116</sup>. *P. heterotremus* has been identified as the causative agent of human paragonimiasis in the northeast India. *Potamiscus manipurensis*, *M. lugubris* and *A. superciliosum* were identified as second intermediate crab hosts of *Paragonimus* in these regions. Further research work is required to determine the first intermediate snail hosts of *Paragonimus* species in India and the role of *P. skrjabini* and *P. westermanni* in human paragonimiasis. The control strategies for paragonimiasis should include the epidemiological surveys to determine the magnitude of the problem, training of public health care providers about the diagnosis and management of paragonimiasis, screening of all patients attending TB clinics, DOTS microscopy centers, hospitals and rural health centers for both tuberculosis and paragonimiasis. People should be educated not to consume fresh and improperly cooked crabs and crayfish, and to clean hands, utensils, cutlery boards, strainers, knives, *etc.* after processing fresh crabs and crayfish. Public health authority should ensure the continuous supply of praziquantel in the hospitals and dispensaries. The problem of paragonimiasis is likely to continue in India unless awareness among public and medical practitioners is spread and appropriate control measures taken.

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*Reprint requests:* Dr T. Shantikumar Singh, Professor & Head, Department of Microbiology, Sikkim Manipal Institute of Medical Sciences, Gangtok 737 102, Sikkim, India  
e-mail: shantikumar\_singh@rediffmail.com

