

ABSTRACT

Background: Soil transmitted-helminthiasis (STH) infections are among neglected tropical diseases that affect populations worldwide, especially in low- and middle-income countries. The groups at risk are pre-school and school-age children and women of reproductive age. Mass drug administration (MDA) is one of the means recommended by the WHO to control soil-transmitted helminthiasis (STH) transmission in all endemic countries. Therefore, this study explored caregivers' knowledge and perceptions about STH anti-helminthiasis MDA.

Methods: A phenomenology study using qualitative research approaches were conducted. In-depth interviews with 15 caregivers, five community drug distributors (CDD), and three key informants' interviews were conducted in Sekyere Central District of the Ashanti region. The data collected through these interviews were transcribed, coded using Nvivo software Version 12 (QSR International Pty Ltd. Cardigan UK). Thematic analysis with both inductive and deductive process was used.

Results: Some participants of this study had good knowledge about STH, however, others had no knowledge because they attributed the causes of STH infections to sugary foodstuffs and believed in the efficacy of traditional treatment (use of herbs and plant leaves) more than the orthodox ones. They also believed that albendazole (Alb) and mebendazole (Meb) which are very effective in the fight against STH, according to WHO, as poison. The lack of information on the MDA programme and the drugs distributed, as well as the lack of motivation for the CDD are among the major barriers to implementing the MDA programmes.

Conclusion: Perceptions and knowledge were relatively good among the respondents studied. NTD programme managers should therefore increase public education as well as motivate CDD.