

Bolivia Connection: U.S. Army Targets Parasites

By Simon Yu, MD

My new patients always ask me with a certain skepticism why I use parasite medications for their conditions when no other doctors seem concerned about parasites. Most American medical doctors hardly have any experience with parasites or experience using parasite medications. My story starts with my experience in Bolivia while serving as a U.S. Army Reserve Medical Officer.

April 2001, our U.S. Army reserve unit, 21st General Hospital from St. Louis, was assigned to Bolivia for a peace keeping mission. Our small medical team consisting of two medical doctors, one dentist, one veterinarian, nursing staff and the support team flew to La Paz, Bolivia from Miami, Florida. In Bolivia, our group joined a medical group from the 2nd Division of the Bolivian Army in Oruro.

Oruro was a silver and tin mining town around 150 years ago at which time it was one of the richest cities in the world. You would never guess that when I was there. In 2001, Oruro was an abandoned mining town in the middle of a semi-desert in an Andes plateau.

In Bolivia, coca (not cocaine) has been consumed for thousands of years to relieve hunger, fatigue and headaches that are symptoms of altitude sickness. Unfortunately for poor farmers, coca plants are also used in the manufacture of cocaine. There have been many unhappy Bolivian Andes Indian farmers whose coca plants have been destroyed by the Bolivian government due to pressure from the U.S. government. The result has been an uprising and protest all over the country. Our assignment was to provide free medical care and to please the crowds. Our mission included preventive medical and dental care for indigenous Andes Indians as well as veterinary care for their animals.

Every morning, a Bolivian Army bus with our U.S. government issued medical supplies took our group to small towns within a 2-3 hour drive and set up a mini medical camp usually at a local school. We always had a translator who understood the local Andes dialect and could translate from Spanish to English.

Before our medical group arrived, there were hundreds of Andes Indians lined up waiting for free medical and dental care. We had to see them at a rate much faster than your typical HMO managed care facility. Within the space of two weeks, we saw approximately 10,000 Andes Indians. As a part of the program, the majority were treated with parasite medications, either pyrantel pamoate or mebendazole, two of the most widely available inexpensive parasite medications available from the U.S. government.

The key part of my story occurred within days after the first group of Indians were treated with anti-parasite medications. Several patients returned to relay stories of seeing parasites pass in their stools and a few had parasites erupt from their skin. Their stories, the samples they brought in jars, and their descriptions of how much better they were feeling, left me with what later turned out to be an important question: How much chronic illness is due to parasite infection?

I don't remember using parasite medications in my medical training or any experiences treating medical conditions related to parasite infestations. Parasites as a potential medical problem in America simply are not part of our medical training except for the brief facts that doctors memorize for medical board exams. I do recollect a few suspicious cases of parasite problems early in my medical practice but stool tests were all negative and the patients were never treated.

Why are parasite problems over looked? First, most of the parasites have very complex life cycles that are often outside of the intestinal tract. Second, we only look at stool samples. Third, stool samples are

old and semi-destroyed when collected and sent to the lab. Stool samples should be fresh. Fourth, most laboratory technicians and pathologists don't have enough training to recognize ova and parasites in the stool.

Since my first hand experience in Bolivia, I've used parasite medications in various combinations. I've observed dramatic responses in my patients in situations where specialists' treatments had failed. Some of the difficult conditions that responded with parasite medications include: intractable allergies and asthma, migraine headache, sciatica, constipation and diarrhea, irritable bowel syndrome, colitis, bronchiectasis, vision loss, anxiety, depression, nightmares, TMJ (temporomandibular joint) problems, chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, multiple sclerosis, arthralgia and myalgia, pelvic pain, eczema, psoriasis, hypertension, and others.

My treatment plan for parasites is based on a clinical suspicion for common symptoms that don't respond to traditional medical treatment as mentioned above. Also, I use technology based on Acupuncture and Acupuncture Meridian Assessment. I've written several articles regarding Acupuncture Meridian Assessment and parasites related to medical conditions (available on www.preventionandhealing.com). I can pick up electronic signals suggesting parasitic-like activity and treat accordingly with herbal, homeopathic and prescribed parasite medications.

Patient response varies depending on individual cases. Most of these patients have already been to many specialists and well known medical institutions in the country. It's hard for me to believe that parasites play such a large role for hidden causes of modern illnesses and this hasn't been addressed and taught by the academic medical community. We desperately need a better biometric technology like Acupuncture Meridian Assessment to detect and treat parasites than current teachings from schools of medicine.

Other overlooked areas of causes of modern illnesses include heavy metal toxicity, hidden dental problems, nutritional deficiency, food allergies, environmental toxicity, and detoxification needs. These neglected problems often promote more susceptible medical conditions for parasites to thrive. Therefore, treating parasites is not good enough. You must correct the underlying problems and restore the biological terrain and the immune system. Otherwise, parasites will return and repeat their complicated life cycles and baffle medical doctors. Most of the Andes Indians we treated will be re-infected in a short time through their water supply, foods and sanitation conditions.

Without my experience in Bolivia while serving in the U.S. Army Reserve and my experience with Acupuncture Meridian Assessment, I would never have uncovered the hidden role of parasite infections. Our tour of duty was short but it has had profound ripple effects on my patients from all over the country. Skeptical patients have become new believers when their "incurable" conditions disappear thanks to the U.S. Army and my Bolivia Connection.

Dr. Simon Yu, M.D. is a Board Certified Internist. He practices Internal Medicine with an emphasis on Alternative Medicine to use the best each has to offer. For more articles and information about alternative medicine as well as patient success stories visit his web site at www.preventionandhealing.com or call Prevention and Healing, Inc., 314-432-7802. You can also attend a free monthly presentation and discussion by Dr. Yu on Alternative Medicine at his office on the second Tuesday each month at 6:30 pm. Please call to verify the date and reserve your space.