

# PREVALENCE OF SCHISTOSOMIASIS AND EVALUATION OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF CERCARIA INFESTED SNAILS

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## **Abstract**

*Schistosomiasis, also known as snail fever, is caused by the parasitic trematode of the genus Schistosoma. This study was conducted to determine the prevalence of schistosomiasis in selected communities in Wushishi and to evaluate the distribution of cercaria-infected snail intermediate host as a risk factor contributing to the spread of the disease. A total of 507 samples, comprising 289 urine and 218 stool samples, were randomly collected from participants and examined for the presence of schistosomal ova using direct microscopic examination, concentration methods, and formal-ether sedimentation techniques. Additionally, 884 snails from three different water bodies were randomly collected over a period of ten months, identified and examined for the shedding of schistosomal cercariae. The results of the findings showed that urinary and intestinal schistosomiasis are endemic in Wushishi, with prevalence rates of 8.3% and 12.4%, respectively. Three distinct snail species were identified from the water bodies: Biomphalaria pfeifferi, Bulinus globosus, and Melanoides tuberculata and from the snails examined, 63 (7.1%) were shedding cercariae. In conclusion, this study reaffirms the endemic nature of schistosomiasis in the study area and the presence of cercariae-shedding snails indicates a significant risk of schistosomiasis transmission to individuals who come into contact with these water bodies. Thus, there is need to implement measures to improve the quality of these fresh water bodies.*

**Keywords:** Schistosomiasis; snails; cercariae; prevalence; water bodies; urine; stool.