

EDUCATION A METHOD OF PEDICULOSIS CONTROL

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In Brazil, as in many other countries, the diffusion of *Pediculus humanus capitis* (common head lice) is widespread, and we have therefore initiated an educational programme that is being diffused in public and private schools, kindergartens, orphanages and religious organizations. The objectives of this programme were: - develop an educational methodology for the prophylaxis of Pediculosis; - furnish information about the biology and control of the *Pediculus humanus capitis*; - make children aware of the necessity for the daily use of a fine-toothed comb. This programme is based on a series of posters and on an informative booklet with the slogan: "Get the lice out of your hair!", as well as illustrative pictures describing the biology of the louse, symptoms, consequences, forms of transmission and measures for the prophylaxis and treatment.

The material is presented at conferences for students, teachers and parents, where the necessity of the daily use of a fine-toothed comb and a check of the child's scalp to find the lice or their nits is explained. Microscopes and other magnifying equipment are part of the "Lice Kit" used in fieldwork and other didactic material.

A study was carried out among 58 children attending public schools, previously selected, taking into account the percentage of infestation. Conferences were held on a weekly basis, with the main objective being to illustrate louse and its implications for human beings. A series of posters was prepared, showing the biology of the louse, besides the fine-toothed comb distribution. After the lectures the students, teachers and parents can visualize the lice in the microscope and magnifying glass.

The results of the study were drawn from an evaluation of the incidence of lice, through a control of each child's scalp each fortnight. The results showed an initial incidence of 67% in girls and 30% in boys. After 3 months of conferences, lectures and meetings with parents and their children, during which the importance of the use of a fine-toothed comb was underlined, a notable reduction was observed, reaching 6% for the girls and 4% for the boys.

A programme of preventive education, consisting in giving children the necessary information and highlighting the advantages that the daily use of a fine-toothed comb can bring, has allowed us to achieve more than satisfactory results in dramatically reducing the incidence and spread of *Pediculus humanus capitis*.