

# **Investigating the prevalence of head lice and socio-economic factors affecting on it in people referring to health centers of Ardabil**

## **Abstract**

**Background:** Head lice infestation is considered an important public health problem in human communities and many socio-economic factors such as residence, type of building, educational stage and other factors affect the prevalence of this disease. Hundreds of millions of people, especially children, are treated for head lice each year, and many children experience head lice before leaving primary school.

**Aim:** Evaluation of the prevalence of head lice and social and economic factors affecting it in clients of Ardabil health centers.

**Materials and Methods:** The present descriptive cross-sectional study was performed on 400 patients referred to Ardabil health centers with priority on the outskirts of the city. After the examination for head lice according to the joint instructions of the Ministry of Health for 25 minutes for each client, the back and armpits of the head were examined and cases of infection were sampled and by an entomologist in the laboratory using diagnostic keys They were identified, and a questionnaire about their economic and social status was completed. To evaluate the prevalence of chi-square and t-tests, and to investigate the relationship between social and economic factors on the prevalence of logistic regression test was performed using SPSS25 software.

**Results:** 400 people were included in the study. The mean age of patients was 16.83 years with a standard deviation of 13.51. 10.3% were infected at the time of the study, 36.1% had a history of past infection and 53.6% had no history of infection. The positive history of pediculosis was higher in women than men. No significant relationship was found between age and infection. The number of family members in people without a history of infection was significantly lower than positive and people with a history of infection. The number of rooms in people with the disease was significantly higher than people with a previous history of the disease and people without a history. Pediculosis was significantly higher in people with lower parental education, lower incomes, dry skin, higher hair density, residents of villa buildings and suburbs.

**Conclusion:** In this study, the rate of head lice infection was 10.3%, which is moderate compared to the average rate of the country and other provinces. The results showed that the infection was higher in females and age group of 10-15

years and also in the suburban population of Ardabil. According to the present study, it seems that health education, improving the living conditions of the people, improving access to health facilities and investigating the disease in human communities such as schools, dormitories and military barracks can be effective in reducing the disease. According to the statistical results, health education in the suburbs in cooperation with Ardabil University of Medical Sciences will be a great help in controlling head lice.

**Keywords:** Head lice, prevalence, social and economic factors, Ardabil