

## Infestation rate of head lice in primary school children in Incheon, Korea

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**Abstract:** The survey of the head louse infestation of primary school children in Incheon city was carried out in May 26-27, 1995. Total number of the children surveyed were 1,530. Four (0.5%) out of 768 boys were infested with nits or adults/nymphs of lice and 72 (9.4%) out of 762 girls were positive with those of lice. The infestation rate of lice for girls was 19 times higher than that of boys.

**Key words:** head louse, Primary school children, Incheon

Head louse infestation is one of the health problems for children in Korea. Some previous investigations were reported sporadically in Korea. Pai *et al.* (1989) examined 6,342 primary school children for head louse infestation and reported a 16.9% positive rate in urban areas and 70.3% in rural areas. The infestation rates in winter season in Incheon were 40.5% among 1,009 primary school children, 33.1% (264 positives among 798 children) in Paju-gun, Kyonggi-do, 39.2% (85 positives among 217 children) at Kangwha-gun, Kyonggi-do and 38.6% (972 positives among 2,515 children) at Kyongju, Kyongsangbuk-do (Ree *et al.*, 1992). Out of 912 children 339 (37.2%), in Kangwon-do were infested with nit or adults of lice (Huh *et al.*, 1993).

Children for head louse infestation in 2nd, 4th and 6th grade of a primary school in Incheon were surveyed in May 26 and 27, 1995. Hairs of each child were checked by naked eyes for the presence of nits or adults of lice.

As shown in Table 1, total number of the primary school children surveyed were 1,530. Four (0.5%) out of 768 boys were infested with nits or adults of lice and 72 (9.4%) out of 762 girls were positive with those of lice. Infestation rates of primary school children in Incheon were 3.2% in 2nd grade, 8.8% in 4th grade, 2.5% in 6th grade, and 5.0% infestation rate in average. Infestation rates of head louse for girls were higher than that of boys ( $P < 0.01$ ). We thought that the host preference of head louse was a girl with long hair in this survey, and suggested that the infestation rate of lice is related to the length of hair.

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**Table 1.** Head louse infestation in school children by grade and sex.

Grade	Boys		Girls		Total	
	No. of surveyed	No. of positive (%)	No. of surveyed	No. of positive (%)	No. of surveyed	No. of positive (%)
2	212	2 (0.9)	256	13 (5.1)	468	15 (3.2)
4	273	2 (0.7)	273	46(16.8)	546	48 (8.8)
6	283	0 (0.0)	233	13 (5.6)	516	13 (2.5)
Total	768	4 (0.5)	762	72 (9.4)	1,530	76 (5.0)

=초록=

### 인천시의 한 국민학교 아동들의 머릿니 감염상

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인천시 소재 한 국민학교 어린이들의 머릿니 감염율을 알아보기 위하여 1995년 5월 26일과 27일 이틀간 국민학교를 방문하여 성충이나 서캐 감염 여부를 조사하였으며, 1,530명의 조사 대상자 중 5.0%가 성충이나 서캐에 감염되어 있었다. 여학생 762명 가운데 72명이 감염되어 9.4%의 감염율을 보였고, 남학생 768명 가운데 4명만이 감염되어 0.5%의 감염율을 나타내어, 여학생이 남학생보다 이에 대한 감염율이 높았다.

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