Blastocystis hominis and colorectal cancer

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Blastocystis hominis is an intestinal parasite of uncertain significance. The ultrastructural diagnosis of *B. hominis* infection in the stool of 320 patients seen in a gastroenterology out-patient clinic has been evaluated. Of the cohort, 83 patients had colorectal cancer, 35 patients had colorectal adenoma and 73 patients had an entirely normal colonic mucosa.

There is a similar incidence of *B. hominis* infection in patients with a normal colonic epithelium (36%) and patients with colorectal adenoma (34%) but the incidence is increased in patients with Dukes' A, B and C colorectal carcinoma (53%).

If patients with adenoma and carcinoma are statistically analysed by logistic regression analysis, with adjustment for age, sex and time of year sample collected, there is a significant difference between the two groups ($P = 0.016$).

This has resulted in the hypothesis shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Proposed hypothesis

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

Can *B. hominis*, an intestinal parasite, be implicated in the aetiology of colorectal cancer? A mere association does not indicate causation. The parasite might flourish in the environment of a cancer – perhaps due to an obstruction. Any comments on the hypothesis?