A healthy young adult male patient presented with frequent (>3/day) formed stools and passage of excessive mucus in stool for 3 months. He did not complain of nocturnal motions, recent diarrhea, blood in stool, straining, weight loss, or pain abdomen. Stool test was normal. He was counseled and treated as a case of irritable bowel syndrome. Due to inadequate relief with empirical therapy, colonoscopy was performed in a subsequent visit. Club-shaped small, round organisms with moving proboscis were seen in the cecum. Organism was later identified as a trematode Gastrodiscoides hominis, a rare foodborne trematode. The patient was treated with praziquantel, without complete relief. Trematode infection might not be the cause of symptoms.

Trematodes or flukes as these are commonly called enter human body through food or skin. Trematodes are unsegmented thick leaf-shaped worms that are slightly flattened dorsoventrally; they bear 2 suckers, one in ventral aspect of body and other on the proboscis, which serve as organs of attachment. Human intestine is infected when metacercariae (encysted form residing inside snail body) is ingested with freshwater aquatic plants. Gastrodiscoides hominis is an intestinal fluke. Cercaria (the free-swimming infective form) may penetrate skin to infect blood vessels (e.g., schistosomiasis), liver (e.g., fascioliasis), pancreas (e.g., eurytrema pancreaticum), and lung (e.g., paragonimiasis).

Exact burden of intestinal flukes in human population is not known. A few case reports of human infestation are available outside Southeast Asia. It has been reported mostly from Assam in India or from Southeast Asian countries because
of prevalent aquaculture in these regions. Humans and domestic animals are definitive hosts, and freshwater snails are intermediate host. Infection is frequently asymptomatic. Diarrhea and abdominal pain are common symptoms for intestinal flukes.

Praziquantel remains the drug of choice for all trematode infections, except fascioliasis, for which bithionol is the drug of choice. Triclabendazole is an alternative in case patient is allergic to praziquantel.

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Conflicts of interest
There are no conflicts of interest.

References