

# Treatment of humans and pigs may reduce endemic tapeworm infection

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The transmission of *Taenia solium*, a pork tapeworm species that infects humans and causes late-onset seizures and epilepsy, can be stopped on a population-wide level with mass treatments of both pigs and humans, researchers have shown.

Researchers from several institutions, including Georgia State University, contributed to the study and published their findings in *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

Humans can become infected after eating contaminated pork or through fecal-oral exposure. This study was aimed at eliminating *Taenia solium* from the [villages](#) of Tumbes Province in Peru, a highly endemic region for the disease.

Researchers screened and treated [pigs](#) and humans in the first two phases of the program. In the final phase, mass treatment was given to 81,170 people in 107 villages, and 55,638 pigs received treatment and vaccination. Mass [treatment](#) included chemotherapy with niclosamide in humans and with oxfendazole in pigs, in combination with pig vaccination.

The researchers found only three of 342 pigs had live, nondegenerated cysts, but no infected pigs were found in 105 of 107 villages. The researchers showed the transmission of *Taenia solium* infection can be interrupted on a regional scale in a highly endemic region.

The researchers say they expect this effect will only be temporary if it is not bolstered by additional activities.

**More information:** Hector H. Garcia et al. Elimination of Transmission in Northern Peru, *New England Journal of Medicine* (2016). [DOI: 10.1056/NEJMoa1515520](https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMoa1515520)

Provided by Georgia State University

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