Electrocuting Parasites: Cutting Edge Pseudoscientific Technology

Want to rid your body of worms and other parasites? Forget the medical doctors and the toxic drugs they prescribe. Just hook yourself up to the “Parasite Zapper,” turn it on, and electrocute the nasty little things.

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As a guest lecturer in a clinical parasitology course, I came across information about a very unusual device while I was updating my lecture material. The device is called the “parasite zapper.” It is a small black box with two copper colored handles or pads. Each handle is connected to the box by a wire. The “patient” holds a handle in each hand while the box is turned on to supposedly rid the body of parasites.

I found this interesting, as I had never heard of such a device for treating parasitic infections. Standard protocol for a suspected parasitic infection is to gather a specimen, carefully identify the parasite in the laboratory, and then prescribe the appropriate anti-parasitic drug. However, this contraption with its tiny nine-volt battery supposedly electrocutes parasites and rids the body of these nasty little critters. No time-consuming medical diagnosis or careful parasite identification is needed with this amazing parasite zapper.

Further investigation revealed that she is also an author and has written several books that are rife with pseudoscience. Her best-known work is probably *The Cure for All Diseases*, in which she reports that all human disease is directly related to parasitic infections or toxins. According to her, if we could rid ourselves of these two curses, almost all diseases would disappear from humanity (Clark 1995, 2). She evidently knows this because she has diagnosed and treated hundreds of patients.

I was not aware that an animal physiologist could obtain a license to treat human patients. I was aware that the title “doctor” does not necessarily mean “medical doctor.” Evidently the state of Indiana was aware of this also; in 1993 Clark caught wind of an investigation of her practice by the State of Indiana and quickly left the state. She later moved her healthcare operation to Mexico, where she operated a clinic called Century Nutrition.

The claims in her book border on the bizarre. Clark states that she has...
discovered though her unpublished “experiments” that each living organism gives off its own frequency like a very tiny radio station. For example, the herpes simplex virus gives off a frequency of 300 KHz while a salmonella bacterium transmits at 400 KHz (Clark 1995, 18). By offsetting these frequencies (whatever that means) with her zapper, the microorganisms can be killed. The idea that each virus, bacterium, parasite, or other living organism transmits a species-specific frequency is preposterous.

She also claims that hundreds of human cancers are caused by one parasite, *Fasciolopsis buski* (Clark 1995, 250). She is convinced that infection with this parasite is also necessary before one can contract HIV (Clark 1995, 150). How she knows this is unclear. A search of the scientific literature reveals no studies that show a connection between this parasite and human cancers or HIV infections.

The fluke *Fasciolopsis buski* is leaf shaped and is about two to three inches long. The adult worm lives in the intestine and is sometimes referred to as the giant intestinal fluke. *Fasciolopsis buski* is found in tropical and subtropical parts of China, Thailand, Vietnam, and India. It gains entry into the body when an individual ingests larvae infected water plants like water chestnuts. The larvae are microscopic and cannot be seen with the naked eye (Zeibig 2013, 269). This fluke is uncommon in the United States, but when it is found it is mostly seen in recent immigrants or visitors from the above-mentioned areas.

for a mother to bring in a child’s diaper with a few roundworms flailing about in the crotch area of the diaper, much to the mother’s horror.

Most infections are easily treated with antiparasitic drugs. In extremely rare cases, a very heavy roundworm infection can cause intestinal blockage and may require surgery. Standard treatment for roundworms and pinworms consists of a prescription for mebendazole, which is very effective against most intestinal worms (Zeibig 2013, 194). I am not aware of a single documented case in which the parasite zapper has eliminated a true pinworm or roundworm infection.

I would venture to say that the zapper, if it delivers the nine volts of direct current (DC) from the battery, could kill a small parasite under controlled conditions. I have seen my battery-powered electric fly swatter electrocute flies with a sparking pop. Parasite killing would be a different matter entirely. The parasite would have to be in a mild salt solution in a petri dish with the parasite located between the two terminals of a nine-volt battery.

But if I complete the circuit with the nine volts applied across each of my hands, my body acts like a tremendous resistor and there is not nearly enough voltage to kill parasites in my body. I tested this idea using a fresh nine-volt battery and a voltmeter. There was enough resistance in my body so that nine-volts went in but none came out, according to my voltmeter. Certainly parasites can be killed with a jolt of electricity, but pushing enough voltage or current through the human body to kill parasites would be painful indeed, not to mention the potentially deadly effect of playing havoc with the electrical conduction of the heart. One might opt for the parasite infection rather than near-electrocution.

Some zapper believers state that they have seen first-hand the zapped worms in the toilet. My guess is that they are actually seeing vegetable fibers or undigested food material. First of all, has the believer actually been diagnosed with a parasitic infection? If so, what species of parasite? Can someone be cured of a disease or infection they may not even have? Where is the scientific evidence that the parasite zapper actually kills parasites?

I could find only one study that evaluated the zapper. “Zapper study shows that zappers have benefit” was published in the *American Naturopathic Medical Association Monitor* (Thiel 1998, 5–9). However, this journal is not available on Pub-Med, the online repository for evidence-based biomedical journals and research studies.

The investigator studied subjects with all sorts of “possible” infections that were never verified. The possible infections were: “Strep, Staph, Viral, Fungal, and Parasitic.” No laboratory-supported diagnosis was made, as the author was a naturopath and was
A survey of the Internet suggests that the zapper is not approved by the FDA for treating any type of infection, perhaps because it is so effective that it would put the pharmaceutical companies and physicians out of business. However, my guess is that it is not approved for treating infections because the whole zapper concept makes no sense and no one can prove that it even works.

The praises of parasite zapping make me wonder about the scientific literacy and the critical thinking skills of the public. In an age of tremendous scientific advances it is a puzzle why so many believe in homeopathy, ear candling, detoxification, magnetic healing, energy wand waving, power balance bracelets, urine drinking, and the host of other illogical and unproven ideas that seem to be so popular today. We should probably add parasite zapping to this list.

**References**


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