

Public health microbiology. my personal perspective

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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

It so happened that I was with my girlfriend and her children that fine June day. She and I had been friends for over 12 years and when she got married I too cried and cried. I felt I lost a friend, but when the children came - 2 tow-headed boys - I realized I had gained another family. We met in the park and had a nice picnic while the boys scampered about running, falling, rolling around in the dirt and grass like little boys are wont to do. After a pleasant afternoon of pushing them on swings and sliding down slides with them, I said good-bye.

A few days later Sheila called me in a bit of a panic and asked me to come to come over something was wrong with Jared and maybe I could help her figure it out. I rushed over and found Sheila peering at Jared's head, twisting it to and fro near the window. She motioned me over and I peeked cautiously at the 7-year-old's head. There was a crusty large circle well-formed on the back of his head! I drew a breath and smiled. I remembered this! It was dermatophytoses more commonly known as ringworm. I let out a sigh of relief. Nothing serious; this could be easily handled.

" Why are you smiling?" Sheila asked perplexed.

I explained that I studied this very disease in my Microbiology class. I told her to wash her hands immediately and then took her place careful not to touch the area. I asked Jared how that particular spot felt.

" Really itchy! I want to scratch it all the time," he wailed. I told him not to itch or else it would spread. " You've got a ringworm in your head," I said as gently as possible. " Ringworm! Cool!"

I had to laugh, only a kid would find that cool. I looked some more and saw the defining circular raised ridge that was well crusted over. It was a large

circle, if this was taken of quickly, it would be very challenging to manage.

When Sheila returned, I told her she had to go to the pediatrician immediately to get Jared's head treated immediately before it spread to others in the house. I checked Tommy and didn't see anything in his head, thankfully they hadn't shared beds in the last couple of nights. To help in preventing cross infection, I put a large bandage on Jared's head before he put on his cap and Sheila hurried to the doctor.

She called later that night and told me that my assessment was correct it was ringworm. The doctor gave her Griseofulvin, an antibiotic, for Jared to take for 4 weeks, 2 tablespoons full 3 times a day, and to wash his hair with Ketoconazole Shampoo, 2% at least twice a week for 4 weeks. Sheila, being a typical over-anxious mother decided to wash his hair once a day with the shampoo. She said it with such concern that I had to laugh.

The whole experience made me feel good because I felt prepared for this situation. What I learned in PH162A really gave me a great grounding to help Sheila and to help stop any spreading to other family members. I know I've chosen the right career. This made me feel really good about myself and my choices.