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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

24 November 2009

**Ref.:** BORGES, C.A.; COSTA-CRUZ, J.M. & PAULA, F.M. - Intestinal parasites inside public restrooms and buses from the city of Uberlândia, Minas Gerais, Brazil. **Rev. Inst. Med. trop. S. Paulo**, **51**: 223-225, 2009

### ON THE CAUSES OF INSUFFICIENT RESTROOM ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

Restroom environmental hygiene is known to be of importance for prevention of certain infectious and parasitic diseases<sup>1,2</sup>. At the same time, it is known that sanitary standards in the lavatories in public places of the former Soviet Union are, on average, far from perfect. One of the psychological mechanisms is, obviously, the following. In the Soviet Army, cleaning of the toilet, as well as other kinds of cleaning work, were used as a punishment for small misdemeanors. The work in the toilet has been the most humiliating one. Therefore majority of men, especially those who had served in the army, have strong aversion against cleaning the toilet rooms. Therefore, public restrooms in Russia are usually cleaned by female personnel. In Moscow, Saint Petersburg and other large cities, sanitary conditions in restrooms are, on average, more satisfactory. In some more distant places, such as Dushanbe, Grozny or Vladikavkaz, the author of this letter observed extremely contaminated toilets in public places, where deposits of excrements accumulated around the apertures or lavatory pans, as well as elsewhere on the floor, were up to one meter in depth or more. Nonetheless, the lavatories were further in use. One of the reasons thereof is obviously related to the fact that in the army, many soldiers from the corresponding areas refused cleaning lavatories, referring to their customs and traditions.

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