To the Editors:

Strongyloides stercoralis isolated by agar plate culture

Prevalence rates of *Strongyloides stercoralis* in Sri Lanka, range from 0-1.6% [1,2,3,4]. None of these studies used agar plate culture, the most sensitive method for detecting *S stercoralis* [4].

We isolated *S stercoralis* by agar plate culture in a child with Hodgkin lymphoma. This is the first time in Sri Lanka that agar plate culture was successful in showing the typical sinuous larval tracks of *S stercoralis* (figure).

An 11-year old boy was admitted to the National Cancer Institute, Maharagama for treatment of Hodgkin lymphoma. After the first cycle of chemotherapy with prednisolone, chlorambucil, vincristine and procarbazine was started, a long non-indurated raised linear streak with a red flare was seen on his right upper arm. This disappeared within 24 hours, suggestive of larva currens. He was given albendazole 200 mg twice daily for 3 days, but after taking two doses he developed a severe allergic generalised urticaria, which subsided only with intravenous hydrocortisone and oral prednisolone.

After two doses of albendazole, saline smear of stools was negative. But larvae were identified by agar plate culture after 48 hours of incubation at room temperature. The plate showed the typical sine-curve like larval tracks left by *Strongyloides* larvae, unlike the tracks with acute angles left by the movements of hookworm larvae [4].

After a second round of albendazole samples of stools were negative in the saline smear, charcoal culture and agar plate culture. Stool samples were examined using agar plate culture every time he was admitted for a chemotherapy cycle. At the time of completion of chemotherapy his stools continued to be negative for *S stercoralis*.

Since disseminated strongyloidiasis can be fatal in immune suppressed patients it would be ideal if patients are screened for *S stercoralis* using agar plate culture before organ transplantation or initiation of immunosuppressive therapy [4].

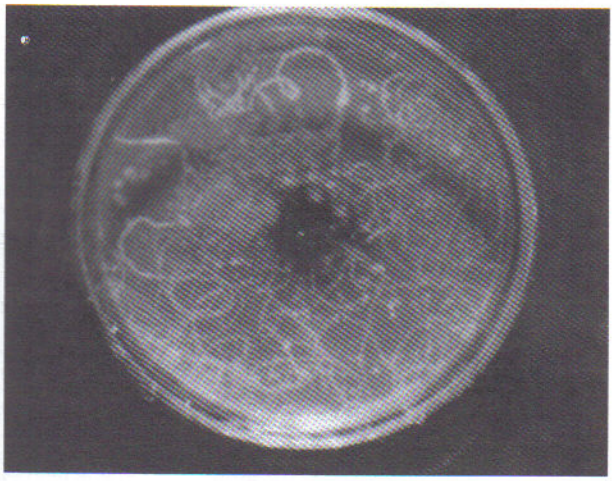

Figure. **Agar plate stool culture showing tracks of *Stronygyloides* larvae. The dark area is the stool sample.**

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