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The investigation of *Toxocara canis* eggs in coats of different dog breeds as a potential transmission route in human toxocariasis

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Abstract

This study was undertaken to determine the prevalence of *Toxocara canis* eggs on the coats of dogs (a potential etiological factor for human toxocariasis) and to see if there were mainly a dog breed and coat type effects for the presence of eggs on the coat. Hair samples were collected from the different breeds of 51 domestic pet dogs and examined for the presence of *T. canis* eggs. A total of 62 *T. canis* eggs (all viable) were found in 21.56% of the dogs. Forty-nine (79.03%) of the eggs recovered were unembryonated, 8 (12.90%) were embryonating, and 5 (8.06%) were embryonated. The maximum densities of the embryonating and embryonated eggs were 93 and 8.45Â eggs per gram (epg) of hair, respectively. The number of eggs recovered was much higher than those previously reported for soil samples. Although the statistical analysis for all dogs in this study showed that there were no breed (PÂ >Â 0.4), coat

type (*P*Â >Â 0.8), sex (*P*Â >Â 0.1), age group (*P*Â >Â 0.1) and hair length (*P*Â >Â 0.3) effects for the presence of *T. canis* eggs per gram of hair, the majority of dogs (82%) with *T. canis* eggs in their coats were breeds that had double coats with thick undercoats suggesting that the coat characteristic may play a role for providing a suitable environment for the development of *T. canis* eggs. Also 82% of infected dogs were under 1 year of age indicating that the age of dog is a very important risk factor. The present study indicates that direct contact with *T. canis* infected dogs may be a potential etiological factor for human toxocariasis.

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Keywords

Human toxocariasis; Direct contact; Dog breed; Dog coat; Hair

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