



Staying alive: The post-consumption fate of parasite spores and its implications for disease dynamics

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ABSTRACT: Studies on the effects of selective predation by fish on disease dynamics in *Daphnia* generally assume that consumption by fish means the death of the parasite. I use a combination of feeding trials and infection assays to test this assumption using the host *Daphnia dentifera* and its common, virulent yeast parasite, *Metschnikowia bicuspidata*. Approximately 50% of *Metschnikowia* spores consumed by bluegill sunfish were released in fecal pellets. These spores remained infective to *D. dentifera*. Therefore, consumption of infected hosts by fish is not necessarily a dead end for the parasite, and in some cases, fish predation may actually help fuel epidemics in natural populations.

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