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The Seminested PCR Based Detection of Leishmania infantum Infection in Asymptomatic Dogs in a New Endemic Focus of Visceral Leishmaniasis in Iran

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Abstract:

Visceral Leishmaniasis (Kala-azar) is a serious health problem in some northern and south western parts of Iran. The incidence of kala-azar caused by Leishmania infantum has recently increased in Nourabad-Mamassani district of Fars Province, in the south of the country. This study was designed to determine the role of asymptomatic dogs as host reservoir of L. infantum in this new formed focus and detection of prevalence of infection near them. A total of 20 asymptomatic stray and sheep dogs were randomly sampled. The Buffy coat layer of their peripheral blood was used for DNA extraction and PCR. A species specific seminested PCR was used for DNA amplification using LINR4, LIN17 and LIN19 primers. These primers amplified variable area of the minicircle kDNA of Leishmania parasites. Of the 20 sampled dogs checked for leishmanial kDNA, six (30%) were found naturally infected. It is concluded that, dogs (Canis familiaris) even if asymptomatic, is considered as the domestic host reservoir of kala-azar in this endemic focus.

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