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Infection of Phlebotomus Sergenti with Leishmania Tropica in a Classical Focus of Leishmania Major in Tunisia

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Abstract : In Tunisia, chronic cutaneous leishmaniasis due to Leishmania (L) tropica is an important health problem. Its spreading has not been fully elucidated. Information on sandfly vectors, as well as their associated Leishmania species, is of paramount importance since vector dispersion is one of the major factors responsible for pathogen dissemination. In total, 650 sandflies were captured between June and August 2015 using sticky paper traps in the governorate of Sidi Bouzid, a classical focus of L. major in the Central-West of Tunisia. Polymerase chain reaction-restriction fragment length polymorphism analysis of the internal transcribed spacer 1 and sequencing were used for Leishmania detection and identification. Ninety-seven unfed females were tested for the presence of Leishmania parasite DNA. Six Phlebotomus sergenti were found positive for L. tropica. This finding enhances the understanding of the cycle extension of L. tropica outside its original focus of Tataouine in the South-East of the country.

Keywords : cutaneous leishmaniasis, Leishmania tropica, sandflies, Tunisia
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