

## Section VIII-C: Parasitic Agents

### General Issues

Additional details about occupationally-acquired cases of parasitic infections, as well as recommendations for post exposure management, are provided elsewhere.<sup>1-3</sup> Effective antimicrobial treatment is available for most parasitic infections.<sup>4</sup> Immunocompromised persons should receive individualized counseling (specific to host and parasite factors) from their personal healthcare provider and their employer about the potential risks associated with working with live organisms.

BSL-2 and ABSL-2 practices,<sup>5</sup> containment equipment, and facilities are recommended for activities with infective stages of the parasites discussed in this chapter.

Microsporidia, historically considered parasites, are now recognized by most experts to be fungi; however, microsporidia are maintained in the parasitic agent section in this edition. These organisms are discussed here because a laboratory-acquired case of infection has been reported,<sup>6</sup> and most persons currently still look for microsporidia associated with discussion of parasitic agents.

Importation of parasitic agents may require CDC and/or USDA importation permits. Domestic transport of this agent may require a permit from USDA/ APHIS/VS.

### Blood and Tissue Protozoal Parasites

Blood and tissue protozoal parasites that pose greatest occupational risk include *Babesia*, *Leishmania*, *Plasmodium*, *Toxoplasma*, and *Trypanosoma*. Other tissue protozoa of potential concern include free-living amoeba (*Acanthamoeba*, *Balamuthia mandrillaris*, *Naegleria fowleri*) and some species of microsporidia including *Encephalitozoon cuniculi* that commonly cause extraintestinal infection.

*Leishmania* spp. cause human leishmaniasis; *Plasmodium* spp. cause human malaria, or some, such as *P. cynomolgi* cause nonhuman primate malaria; *Toxoplasma gondii* causes toxoplasmosis; *Trypanosoma cruzi* causes American trypanosomiasis or Chagas disease; and *Trypanosoma brucei gambiense* and *T. b. rhodesiense* cause African trypanosomiasis or (African) sleeping sickness. With the exception of *Leishmania* and *Toxoplasma*, these agents are classically thought of as bloodborne and have stages that circulate in the blood. Although not always recognized, both *Leishmania* and *Toxoplasma* may have stages that circulate in the blood. Some, such as *Plasmodium* and *Trypanosoma cruzi*, also have tissue stages. *Leishmania* spp. are well recognized to have skin and deep tissue stages and *Toxoplasma gondii* forms tissue cysts, including in the central nervous system.

## Occupational Infections

Laboratory-acquired infections with *Leishmania* spp., *Plasmodium* spp., *Toxoplasma gondii*, and *Trypanosoma* spp. have been reported; the majority of these involved needle-stick or other cutaneous exposure to infectious stages of the organisms through abraded skin, including microabrasions.<sup>1,2</sup>

Laboratory-acquired infections may be asymptomatic. If clinically manifest, they may exhibit features similar to those seen in naturally acquired infections, although bypassing natural modes of infection could result in atypical signs and symptoms. Cutaneous leishmaniasis could manifest as various types of skin lesions (e.g., nodules, ulcers, plaques), while visceral leishmaniasis may result in fever, hepatosplenomegaly, and pancytopenia. However, only one of the laboratorians known to have become infected with *L. (L.) donovani*, an organism typically associated with visceral leishmaniasis, developed clinical manifestations of visceral involvement (e.g., fever, splenomegaly, leukopenia).<sup>1</sup> The other laboratorians developed skin lesions. Laboratory-acquired malaria infections may result in fever and chills, fatigue, and hemolytic anemia. Laboratorians can become infected with *T. gondii* through accidental ingestion of sporulated oocysts, but also may become infected through skin or mucous membrane contact with either tachyzoites or bradyzoites in human or animal tissue or culture. Symptoms in laboratory-acquired *T. gondii* infections may be restricted to flu-like conditions with enlarged lymph nodes, although rash may be present. *Trypanosoma cruzi* infection could manifest initially as swelling and redness at the inoculation site, fever, rash, and adenopathy. Myocarditis and electrocardiographic changes may develop. Infection with *T. b. rhodesiense* and *T. b. gambiense* also may cause initial swelling and redness at the inoculation site, followed by fever, rash, adenopathy, headache, fatigue and neurologic signs.

Blood and tissue protozoal infections associated with exposure to laboratory animals are not common. Potential direct sources of infection for laboratory personnel include accidental needle-stick while inoculating or bleeding animals, contact with lesion material from cutaneous leishmaniasis, and contact with blood of experimentally or naturally infected animals. In the case of rodents experimentally inoculated with *Toxoplasma gondii* via the intraperitoneal route, contact with peritoneal fluid could result in exposure to infectious organisms. Mosquito-transmitted malaria infections can occur under laboratory conditions as nearly half of the occupationally acquired malaria infections were reported to be vector borne, and contact with body fluids (including feces) of reduviids (triatomines) experimentally or naturally infected with *T. cruzi* poses a risk to laboratory personnel.

*Babesia microti* and other *Babesia* spp. can cause human babesiosis or piroplasmiasis. Under natural conditions, *Babesia* is transmitted by the bite of an infected tick, or by blood transfusion; in the United States, hard ticks (*Ixodes*) are the principal vectors. Although no laboratory infections with *Babesia* have been

reported, they could easily result from accidental needle-stick or other cutaneous exposure of abraded skin to blood containing parasites. Persons who are asplenic, immunocompromised, or elderly have increased risk for severe illness if infected.

### *Natural Modes of Infection*

Leishmaniasis is endemic in parts of the tropics, subtropics, and southern Europe, while malaria is widely distributed throughout the tropics. However, the prevalence of these diseases varies widely among endemic areas; the diseases can be very focal in nature. The four species of malaria that infect humans have no animal reservoir hosts. Some *Leishmania* spp. may have a number of important mammalian reservoir hosts, including rodents and dogs. Only cats and other felines can serve as definitive hosts for *Toxoplasma gondii*, which is distributed worldwide. Birds and mammals, including sheep, pigs, rodents, cattle, deer, and humans can be infected from ingestion of tissue cysts or fecal oocysts and subsequently develop tissue cysts throughout the body. Chagas disease occurs from Mexico southward throughout most of Central and South America, with the exception of the southern-most tip of South America. It has been characterized in some accounts as a zoonotic infection, yet the role of animals in maintaining human infection is unclear. A variety of domestic and wild animals are found naturally infected with *T. cruzi*, but human infection undoubtedly serves as the major source of infection for other humans. African trypanosomiasis is endemic in sub-Saharan Africa but is extremely focal in its distribution. Generally, *T. b. gambiense* occurs in West and Central Africa while *T. b. rhodesiense* occurs in East and Southeast Africa. *T. b. rhodesiense* is a zoonotic infection with cattle or, in a more limited role, game animals serving as reservoir hosts, whereas humans are the only epidemiologically important hosts for *T. b. gambiense*.

*Leishmania*, *Plasmodium*, and both American and African trypanosomes are all transmitted in nature by blood-sucking insects. Sandflies in the genera *Phlebotomus* and *Lutzomyia* transmit *Leishmania*; mosquitoes in the genus *Anopheles* transmit *Plasmodium*; reduviid (triatomine) bugs such as *Triatoma*, *Rhodnius*, and *Panstrongylus* transmit *T. cruzi* (in the feces rather than the saliva of the bug), and tsetse flies in the genus *Glossina* transmit African trypanosomes.

### *Laboratory Safety and Containment Recommendations*

Infective stages may be present in blood, CSF, bone marrow, or other biopsy tissue, lesion exudates, and infected arthropods. Depending on the parasite, the primary laboratory hazards are skin penetration through wounds or microabrasions, accidental parenteral inoculation, and transmission by arthropod vectors. Aerosol or droplet exposure of organisms to the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, or mouth are potential hazards when working with cultures of

*Leishmania*, *Toxoplasma gondii*, or *T. cruzi*, or with tissue homogenates or blood containing hemoflagellates. Immuno-compromised persons should avoid working with live organisms.

Because of the potential for grave consequences of toxoplasmosis in the developing fetus, women who are or might become pregnant and who are at risk for infection with *T. gondii* should receive counseling from their personal physician and employer regarding appropriate means of mitigating the risk (including alternate work assignments, additional PPE, etc.). Working with infectious oocysts poses the greatest risk of acquiring infection; needle-sticks with material containing tachyzoites or bradyzoites also pose a significant risk. Infection with tachyzoites or bradyzoites through mucous membranes or skin abrasions is also possible. Kittens and cats that might be naturally infected with *Toxoplasma* pose some risk to personnel.<sup>5</sup> Good hygiene and use of personal protection measures would reduce the risk.

One laboratory infection with microsporidia has been reported, associated with conjunctival exposure to spores leading to the development of keratoconjunctivitis. Infection could also result from ingestion of spores in feces, urine, sputum, CSF, or culture. No laboratory-acquired infections have been reported with *Acanthamoeba* spp., *Balamuthia mandrillaris* or *Naegleria fowleri*; however, the possibility of becoming infected by inhalation, by accidental needle-sticks, or through exposure to mucous membranes or microabrasions of the skin should be considered.

BSL-2 and ABSL-2 practices, containment equipment, and facilities are recommended for activities with infective stages of the parasites listed.<sup>5</sup> Infected arthropods should be maintained in facilities that reasonably preclude the exposure of personnel or the escape of insects. (See Appendix E.) Personal protection (e.g., lab coat, gloves, face shield), in conjunction with containment in a BSC, is indicated when working with cultures, tissue homogenates, or blood containing organisms.

### *Special Issues*

**Treatment** Highly effective medical treatment for most protozoal infections exists.<sup>4</sup> An importation or domestic transfer permit for this agent can be obtained from USDA/APHIS/VS.

**Transfer of Agent** Importation of this agent may require CDC and/or USDA importation permits. Domestic transport of this agent may require a permit from USDA/APHIS/VS. A DoC permit may be required for the export of this agent to another country. See Appendix C for additional information.

## **Intestinal Protozoal Parasites**

Intestinal protozoal parasites that pose greatest occupational risk include *Cryptosporidium*, *Isospora*, *Entamoeba histolytica*, and *Giardia*. Other intestinal pathogens of concern are some species of microsporidia, specifically *Septata intestinalis* and *Enterocytozoon bieneusi*. *Cryptosporidium parvum*, *C. hominis*, and *Isospora belli* cause intestinal coccidiosis, most often referred to as cryptosporidiosis and isosporiasis, respectively. *Entamoeba histolytica* can cause both intestinal and extraintestinal infection (e.g., liver abscess) called amebiasis, and *Giardia intestinalis* causes giardiasis.

### *Occupational Infections*

Laboratory-acquired infections with *Cryptosporidium* spp., *E. histolytica*, *G. intestinalis*, and *I. belli* have been reported.<sup>1-3</sup> The mode of exposure in laboratory-acquired infections in this group of agents mimics the natural infection routes for the most part, and consequently, clinical symptoms are typically very similar to those seen in naturally acquired infections. For *Cryptosporidium*, *E. histolytica*, *G. intestinalis*, and *I. belli*, the common clinical manifestations are symptoms of gastroenteritis (e.g., diarrhea, abdominal pain and cramping, loss of appetite). Infection with *E. histolytica* may result in bloody stools.

Laboratory animal-associated infections with this group of organisms have been reported and provide a direct source of infection for laboratory personnel who are exposed to feces of experimentally or naturally infected animals.<sup>3</sup> Handling *Cryptosporidium* oocysts requires special care, as laboratory-acquired infections have occurred commonly in personnel working with this agent, especially if calves are used as the source of oocysts. Other experimentally infected animals pose potential risks as well. Circumstantial evidence suggests that airborne transmission of oocysts of this small organism (i.e., 4-6 µm diameter) may occur. Rigid adherence to protocol should reduce the occurrence of laboratory-acquired infection in laboratory and animal care personnel.

### *Natural Modes of Infection*

All of these intestinal protozoa have a cosmopolitan distribution, and in some settings, including developed countries, the prevalence of infection can be high. The natural mode of infection for this group of organisms is typically ingestion of an environmentally hardy oocyst (for the coccidia) or cyst (for *E. histolytica* and *G. intestinalis*). The ID<sub>50</sub>, best established for *Cryptosporidium*, has been shown for some strains to be 5-10 oocysts.<sup>7</sup> This suggests that even a single oocyst might pose a risk for infection in an exposed laboratorian. The infectious dose for other parasites in this group is not as well established, but is probably in the same range. Further, because these protozoa multiply in the host, ingestion of even small inocula can cause infection and illness. The role for animal reservoir hosts is diverse in this group of organisms. In the case of *C. hominis*, principally humans are infected, whereas for *C. parvum*, humans, cattle, and other

mammals can be infected and serve as reservoir hosts for human infection. In the case of *E. histolytica*, humans serve as the only significant source of infection, and there is no convincing evidence that any animal serves as reservoir host for *I. belli*. The extent to which *Giardia* spp. parasitizing animals can infect humans is only now becoming better understood, but most human infection seems to be acquired from human-to-human transmission. The organisms in this group do not require more than one host to complete their life cycle because they infect, develop, and result in shedding of infectious stages all in a single host. Ingestion of contaminated drinking or recreational water has also been a common source of cryptosporidiosis and giardiasis.

### *Laboratory Safety and Containment Recommendations*

Infective stages may be present in the feces or other body fluids and tissues. Depending on the parasite, ingestion is the primary laboratory hazard. Immunocompromised persons should avoid working with live organisms. Laboratorians who work only with killed or inactivated parasite materials, or parasite fractions, are not at significant risk.

Similarly, no accidental laboratory infection with *Sarcocystis* has been reported, although care should be exercised when working with infected meat products to avoid accidental ingestion. It is not known if laboratorians could be accidentally infected through parenteral inoculation of *Sarcocystis*; nevertheless caution should be exercised when working with cultures, homogenates, etc.

BSL-2 and ABSL-2 practices, containment equipment, and facilities are recommended for activities with infective stages of the parasites listed.<sup>5</sup> Primary containment (e.g., BSC) or personal protection (e.g., face shield) is especially important when working with *Cryptosporidium*. Oocysts are infectious when shed (i.e., are already sporulated and do not require further development time outside the host), often are present in stool in high numbers, and are environmentally hardy.

Commercially available iodine-containing disinfectants are effective against *E. histolytica* and *G. intestinalis*, when used as directed, as are high concentrations of chlorine (1 cup of full-strength commercial bleach [~5% chlorine] per gallon of water [1:16, vol/vol]).<sup>1,2</sup>

If a laboratory spill contains *Cryptosporidium* oocysts, the following approach is recommended.<sup>2</sup> A conventional laboratory detergent/cleaner should be used to remove contaminating matter from surfaces (e.g., of bench tops and equipment). After organic material has been removed, 3% hydrogen peroxide (i.e., undiluted, commercial hydrogen peroxide, identified on the bottle as 3% or “10 vol” hydrogen peroxide) can be used to disinfect surfaces; dispensing bottles that contain undiluted hydrogen peroxide should be readily available in laboratories in which surfaces could become contaminated.

Affected surfaces should be flooded (i.e., completely covered) with hydrogen peroxide. If a large volume of liquid contaminates surfaces, to avoid diluting the hydrogen peroxide, absorb the bulk of the spill with disposable paper towels. Dispense hydrogen peroxide repeatedly, as needed, to keep affected surfaces covered (i.e., wet/moist) for ~30 minutes. Absorb residual hydrogen peroxide with disposable paper towels and allow surfaces to dry thoroughly (10 to 30 minutes) before use. All paper towel litter and other disposable materials should be autoclaved or similarly disinfected before disposal. Reusable laboratory items can be disinfected and washed in a laboratory dishwasher by using the “sanitize” cycle and a detergent containing chlorine. Alternatively, immerse contaminated items for ~1 hour in a water bath preheated to 50° C; thereafter, wash them in a detergent/disinfectant solution.

### *Special Issues*

**Treatment** Highly effective medical treatment exists for most protozoal infections; treatment with nitazoxanide for *Cryptosporidium* is now available, but efficacy has not been proven.<sup>4</sup>

**Transfer of Agent** Importation of these agents may require CDC and/or USDA importation permits. Domestic transport of these agents may require a permit from USDA/APHIS/VS. A DoC permit may be required for the export of this agent to another country. See Appendix C for additional information.

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### ***Trematode Parasites***

Trematode parasites that pose greatest occupational risk are the *Schistosoma* spp., although others including *Fasciola* are of concern. *Schistosoma mansoni* causes intestinal schistosomiasis or bilharziasis, also known as Manson’s blood fluke, in which the adult flukes reside in the venules of the bowel and rectum. *Fasciola hepatica*, the sheep liver fluke, causes fascioliasis, where the adult flukes live in the common and hepatic bile ducts of the human or animal host.

### *Occupational Infections*

Laboratory-acquired infections with *S. mansoni* and *F. hepatica* have been reported, but accidental infections with other *Schistosoma* spp. could also occur.<sup>1,2</sup> By nature of the infection, none have been directly associated with laboratory animals, with the exception of infected mollusk intermediate hosts.

Laboratory-acquired infections with *F. hepatica* may be asymptomatic, but could have clinical manifestations such as right upper quadrant pain, biliary colic, obstructive jaundice, elevated transaminase levels, and other pathology associated with hepatic damage resulting from migration of the fluke through the liver en route to the bile duct. Most laboratory exposures to schistosomes would

result in predictably low worm burdens with minimal disease potential. However, clinical manifestations of infection with *S. mansoni* could include dermatitis, fever, cough, hepatosplenomegaly, and adenopathy.

#### *Natural Modes of Infection*

*Fasciola hepatica* has a cosmopolitan distribution and is most common in sheep-raising areas, although other natural hosts include goats, cattle, hogs, deer, and rodents. Snails in the family Lymnaeidae, primarily species of *Lymnaea*, are intermediate hosts for *F. hepatica*, and release cercariae that encyst on vegetation. Persons become infected with *F. hepatica* by eating raw or poorly cooked vegetation, especially green leafy plants such as watercress, on which metacercariae have encysted.

*Schistosoma mansoni* is widely distributed in Africa, South America, and the Caribbean; the prevalence of infection has been rapidly changing in some areas. Infection occurs when persons are exposed to free-swimming cercariae in contaminated bodies of water; cercariae can penetrate intact skin. The natural snail hosts capable of supporting development of *S. mansoni* are various species of *Biomphalaria*.

#### *Laboratory Safety and Containment Recommendations*

Infective stages of *F. hepatica* (metacercariae) and *S. mansoni* (cercariae) may be found, respectively, encysted on aquatic plants or in the water in laboratory aquaria used to maintain snail intermediate hosts. Ingestion of fluke metacercariae and skin penetration by schistosome cercariae are the primary laboratory hazards. Dissection or crushing of schistosome-infected snails may also result in exposure of skin or mucous membrane to cercariae-containing droplets. Additionally, metacercariae may be inadvertently transferred from hand to mouth by fingers or gloves, following contact with contaminated aquatic vegetation or aquaria.

All reported cases of laboratory-acquired schistosomiasis have been caused by *S. mansoni*, which probably reflects the fact that many more laboratories work with *S. mansoni* than with other *Schistosoma* spp. However, accidental infection with *S. haematobium*, *S. japonicum*, and *S. mekongi* could easily occur in the same manner as described for *S. mansoni*.

Exposure to cercariae of non-human species of schistosomes (e.g., avian species) may cause mild to severe dermatitis (swimmer's itch).

BSL-2 and ABSL-2 practices, containment equipment and facilities are recommended for laboratory work with infective stages of the parasites listed.<sup>5</sup> Gloves should be worn when there may be direct contact with water containing cercariae or vegetation with encysted metacercariae from naturally or experimentally infected snail intermediate hosts. Long-sleeved laboratory coats or other protective garb should be worn when working in the immediate area of

aquaria or other water sources that may contain schistosome cercariae. Water from laboratory aquaria containing snails and cercariae should be decontaminated (e.g., ethanol, hypochlorite, iodine, or heat) before discharged to sanitary sewers.

### *Special Issues*

**Treatment** Highly effective medical treatment for most trematode infections exists.<sup>4</sup>

**Transfer of Agent** Importation of these agents may require CDC and/or USDA importation permits. Domestic transport of these agents may require a permit from USDA/APHIS/VS. A DoC permit may be required for the export of this agent to another country. See Appendix C for additional information.

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### **Cestode Parasites**

Cestode parasites of potential risk for laboratorians include *Echinococcus* spp., *Hymenolepis nana*, and *Taenia solium*. Echinococcosis is an infection caused by cestodes in the genus *Echinococcus*; *E. granulosus* causes cystic echinococcosis, *E. multilocularis* causes alveolar echinococcosis, and *E. vogeli* and *E. oligarthrus* cause polycystic echinococcosis. Humans serve as intermediate hosts and harbor the metacestode or larval stage, which produces a hydatid cyst. *Hymenolepis nana*, the dwarf tapeworm, is cosmopolitan in distribution and produces hymenolepiasis, or intestinal infection with the adult tapeworm. *Taenia solium*, the pork tapeworm, causes both taeniasis (infection of the intestinal tract with the adult worm), and cysticercosis (infection of subcutaneous, intermuscular, and central nervous system with the metacestode stage or cysticercus).

### *Occupational Infections*

No laboratory-acquired infections have been reported with any cestode parasite.

### *Natural Modes of Infection*

The infectious stage of *Echinococcus*, *Hymenolepis*, and *Taenia* is the oncosphere contained within the egg. *Hymenolepis nana* is a one-host parasite and does not require an intermediate host; it is directly transmissible by ingestion of feces of infected humans or rodents. The life cycles of *Echinococcus* and *Taenia* require two hosts. Canids, including dogs, wolves, foxes, coyotes, and jackals, are the definitive hosts for *E. granulosus*, and various herbivores such as sheep, cattle, deer, and horses are the intermediate hosts. Foxes and coyotes are the principal definitive hosts for *E. multilocularis*, although dogs and cats also can become infected and rodents serve as the intermediate hosts. Bush dogs and pacas serve as the definitive and intermediate hosts, respectively, for *E. vogeli*. Dogs also may be infected. *Echinococcus oligarthrus* uses wild felines,

including cougar, jaguarondi, jaguar, ocelot, and pampas cat, as definitive hosts and various rodents such as agoutis, pacas, spiny rats, and rabbits serve as intermediate hosts. People become infected when eggs shed by the definitive host are accidentally ingested. For *T. solium*, people can serve both as definitive host (harbor the adult tapeworm), and as accidental intermediate host (harbor the larval stages cysticerci). Pigs are the usual intermediate host, becoming infected as they scavenge human feces containing eggs.

#### *Laboratory Safety and Containment Recommendations*

Infective eggs of *Echinococcus* spp. may be present in the feces of carnivore definitive hosts.<sup>3</sup> *Echinococcus granulosus* poses the greatest risk because it is the most common and widely distributed species, and because dogs are the primary definitive hosts. For *T. solium*, infective eggs in the feces of humans serve as the source of infection. Accidental ingestion of infective eggs from these sources is the primary laboratory hazard. Ingestion of cysticerci of *T. solium* (*Cysticercus cellulosae*) leads to human infection with the adult tapeworm. For those cestodes listed, the ingestion of a single infective egg from the feces of the definitive host could potentially result in serious disease. Ingestion of the eggs of *H. nana* in the feces of definitive hosts (humans or rodents) could result in intestinal infection.

Although no laboratory-acquired infections with either *Echinococcus* spp. or *T. solium* have been reported, the consequences of such infections could be serious. Laboratory-acquired infections with cestodes could result in various clinical manifestations, depending upon the type of cestode. Human infection with *Echinococcus* spp. could range from asymptomatic to severe. The severity and nature of the signs and symptoms depends upon the location of the cysts, their size, and condition (alive versus dead). Clinical manifestations of a liver cyst could include hepatosplenomegaly, right epigastric pain, and nausea, while a lung cyst may cause chest pain, dyspnea, and hemoptysis. For *T. solium*, ingestion of eggs from human feces can result in cysticercosis, with cysts located in subcutaneous and intermuscular tissues, where they may be asymptomatic. Cysts in the central nervous system may cause seizures and other neurologic symptoms. Ingestion of tissue cysts of *T. solium* can lead to development of adult worms in the intestine of humans. Immunocompromised persons working with these cestodes must take special care as the asexual multiplication of the larval stages of these parasites makes them especially dangerous to such persons.

BSL-2 and ABSL-2 practices, containment equipment, and facilities are recommended for work with infective stages of these parasites.<sup>5</sup> Special attention should be given to personal hygiene (e.g., hand washing) and laboratory practices that would reduce the risk of accidental ingestion of infective eggs. Gloves are recommended when there may be direct contact with feces or with surfaces contaminated with fresh feces of carnivores infected with *Echinococcus* spp., humans infected with *T. solium*, or humans or rodents infected with *H. nana*.

## Special Issues

**Treatment** Highly effective medical treatment for most cestode infections exists.<sup>4</sup>

**Transfer of Agent** Importation of these agents may require CDC and/or USDA importation permits. Domestic transport of these agents may require a permit from USDA/APHIS/VS. A DoC permit may be required for the export of this agent to another country. See Appendix C for additional information.

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## Nematode Parasites

Nematode parasites that pose greatest occupational risk include the ascarids, especially *Ascaris* and *Baylisascaris*; hookworms, both human and animal; *Strongyloides*, both human and animal; *Enterobius*; and the human filariae, primarily *Wuchereria* and *Brugia*. *Ancylostoma braziliense* and *A. caninum* cause hookworm infection in cats and dogs, respectively. *Ascaris lumbricoides* causes ascariasis and is known as the large intestinal roundworm of humans. *Enterobius vermicularis*, known as the human pinworm or seatworm, causes enterobiasis or oxyuriasis. *Strongyloides*, the threadworm, causes strongyloidiasis. *Ancylostoma*, *Ascaris*, and *Strongyloides* reside as adults in the small intestine of their natural hosts, whereas *E. vermicularis* colonizes the cecum and appendix.

## Occupational Infections

Laboratory-associated infections with *Ancylostoma* spp., *A. lumbricoides*, *E. vermicularis*, and *Strongyloides* spp. have been reported.<sup>1-3</sup> Laboratory infections with hookworms and *Strongyloides* presumptively acquired from infected animals have been reported. Allergic reactions to various antigenic components of human and animal ascarids (e.g., aerosolized antigens) may pose risk to sensitized persons.

Laboratory-acquired infections with these nematodes can be asymptomatic, or can present with a range of clinical manifestations dependent upon the species and their location in host. Infection with hookworm of animal origin can result in cutaneous larva migrans or creeping eruption of the skin. Infection with *A. lumbricoides* may produce cough, fever, and pneumonitis as larvae migrate through the lung, followed by abdominal cramps and diarrhea or constipation from adult worms in the intestine. Infection with *E. vermicularis* usually causes perianal pruritis, with intense itching. Infection with animal *Strongyloides* spp. may induce cutaneous larva migrans.

## Natural Modes of Infection

*Ancylostoma* infection in dogs and cats is endemic worldwide. Human infection occurs through penetration of the skin. Cutaneous larva migrans or creeping eruption occurs when infective larvae of animal hookworms, typically dog and

cat hookworms, penetrate the skin and begin wandering. *Ancylostoma* larvae can also cause infection if ingested. These larvae do not typically reach the intestinal tract, although *A. caninum* has on rare occasions developed into non-gravid adult worms in the human gut.

*Ascaris lumbricoides* infection is endemic in tropical and subtropical regions of the world. Infection occurs following accidental ingestion of infective eggs. Unembryonated eggs passed in the stool require two to three weeks to become infectious, and *Ascaris* eggs are very hardy in the environment.

*Enterobius vermicularis* occurs worldwide, although infection tends to be more common in school-age children than adults, and in temperate than tropical regions. Pinworm infection is acquired by ingestion of infective eggs, most often on contaminated fingers following scratching of the perianal skin. Eggs passed by female worms are not immediately infective, but only require several hours' incubation to become fully infectious. Infection with this worm is relatively short (60 days on average), and reinfection is required to maintain an infection.

*Strongyloides* infection in animals is endemic worldwide. People become infected with animal *Strongyloides* when infective, filariform larvae penetrate the skin, and can develop cutaneous creeping eruption (larva currens).

#### *Laboratory Safety and Containment Recommendations*

Eggs and larvae of most nematodes are not infective in freshly passed feces; development to the infective stages may require from one day to several weeks. Ingestion of the infective eggs or skin penetration by infective larvae are the primary hazards to laboratory staff and animal care personnel. Development of hypersensitivity is common in laboratory personnel with frequent exposure to aerosolized antigens of ascarids.

Ascarid eggs are sticky, and special care should be taken to ensure thorough cleaning of contaminated surfaces and equipment. Caution should be used even when working with formalin-fixed stool samples because ascarid eggs can remain viable and continue to develop to the infective stage in formalin.<sup>8</sup>

Working with infective eggs of other ascarids, such as *Toxocara* and *Baylisascaris*, poses significant risk because of the potential for visceral migration of larvae, including invasion of the eyes and central nervous system. *Strongyloides stercoralis* is of particular concern to immuno-suppressed persons because potentially life-threatening systemic hyperinfection can occur. Lugol's iodine kills infective larvae and should be sprayed onto skin or laboratory surfaces that are contaminated accidentally. The larvae of *Trichinella* in fresh or digested tissue could cause infection if accidentally ingested. Arthropods infected with filarial parasites pose a potential hazard to laboratory personnel.

BSL-2 and ABSL-2 practices, containment equipment, and facilities are recommended for activities with infective stages of the nematodes listed here.<sup>5</sup> Exposure to aerosolized sensitizing antigens of ascarids should be avoided. Primary containment (e.g., BSC) is recommended for work that may result in aerosolization of sensitization from occurring.

### *Special Issues*

**Treatment** Highly effective medical treatment for most nematode infections exists.<sup>4</sup>

**Transfer of Agent** Importation of these agents may require CDC and/or USDA importation permits. Domestic transport of these agents may require a permit from USDA/APHIS/VS. A DoC permit may be required for the export of this agent to another country. See Appendix C for additional information.

### **References**

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