LEPTOSPIROSIS IN THE PHILIPPINES
VII. SEROLOGIC AND ISOLATION STUDIES ON HORSES

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MICROBIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

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ABSTRACT
A SURVEY OF 12 HORSES SHOWED 8 WITH AGGLUTINATION TITERS OF 1:100 OR GREATER.
THE SEROLOGICAL EVIDENCE OF LEPTOSPIROSIS IS CORROBORATED BY THE ISOLATION OF LEPTOSPIRA AUSTRALIS FROM ONE HORSE.
**KEY WORDS**

- Leptospirosis
- Philippines
- Serologic and Isolation Studies

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**DD FORM 1473 (BACK) (PART 2)**
LEPTOSPIROSIS IN THE PHILIPPINES†
VII. SEROLOGIC AND ISOLATION STUDIES ON HORSES

E.R. CARLOS, C.C. TSAI, W.D. KUNDIN, R.H. WATTEN, G.S. IRVING and C. VILLANUEVA

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INTRODUCTION

The versatile character of leptospirosis as reflected in its wide choice of hosts has not been completely studied in the Philippines. (Bolte, 1966). No work has been published locally on the horse as a probable reservoir and source of infection.

In view of the meagre data available, serologic and isolation surveys were undertaken to gauge the status of equine leptospirosis in the country.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Blood obtained from 12 horses was analyzed for leptospiral antibodies using microscopic agglutination test with live antigens. Urine specimens for culture studies were also obtained in accordance with Galton's technique (1962).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows 8 out of 12 horses with agglutination titers of 1:100 or greater. Three subjects demonstrated levels to two serotypes while five had titers to a single serotype. The presumptive existence of infection was corroborated by the isolation of Leptospira australis.

The serologic picture depicted by the survey was quite heterogeneous, and activity of leptospirae not usually detected in horses was identified. The predominant serotypes reported commonly, pomona(NCDCZoonoses, July 1966; Hoeden, 1958) and grippotyphosa (Fiocre et al., 1966; Hoeden, 1958) did not compose the majority of observed leptospirae.

The isolation of australis and the corroborative serologic findings are interesting. Serological evidence of leptospiral infection has been reported from Russia, Austria, Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, United States, France, and Yugoslavia. The predominant serotypes have been commonly detected against heterologous antibodies. The serotypes isolated from horses in Europe are pomona, grippotyphosa, sejroe, saxkoebing, canicola, and icterohaemorrhagiae (Fiocre, 1966; Hoeden,
1958; NCDC Zoonoses, July 1966). However the limited number of subjects in this report does not make this observation conclusive.

The results obtained do not define the role of leptospirae as pathogens in horses. No attempts were made to examine intraocular tissues for evidence of the spirochete since the horses analyzed were asymptomatic. Nevertheless, its affinity for these tissues were asserted by other authors (Kemenes et al., 1961; Morter et al., 1964; Roberts, 1958; Williams, 1968; Witmer, 1956). It has been implicated in equine periodic ophthalmia, recurrent iridocyclitis, and uveitis. Experimental work (Bolte, 1966; Sova, 1964) also succeeded in demonstrating its capacity to invade and persist in the tissues of the eyes. Such studies are yet to be conducted in the Philippines.

SUMMARY

A survey of 12 horses showed 8 with agglutination titers of 1:100 or greater. The serological evidence of leptospirosis is corroborated by the isolation of Leptospira australis from one horse.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are indebted to Mrs. C. R. Sulzer for her assistance in the final confirmation of the isolate in the NCDC Leptospirosis Unit, Atlanta, Georgia, and to Mr. Antonio Nocom, owner of the Ansa Cattle and Crop Farm, Surallah, South Cotabato, Philippines.

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Williams, R. D., (1968). The presence and duration of persistence of Leptospira pomona in equine ocular tissues following experimental induced systemic infection. M.S. Thesis, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana, U.S.A.