

BRIEF COMMUNICATION

OCCURRENCE OF *BIOMPHALARIA TENAGOPHILA* (D'ORBIGNY, 1835) IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ILHABELA, AT THE SEACOAST OF SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL

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KEYWORDS: *Biomphalaria tenagophila*; Geographic distribution; Schistosomiasis.

The distribution of *Biomphalaria tenagophila*, the main host species, has been expanding in the State of São Paulo. This species has been found in several municipalities⁴ putting at risk the human populations around, as the localities lie in tourism areas, constantly receiving immigrants who may come from endemic regions.

The municipality of Ilhabela is one of the best representatives of this populational fluctuation, for the number of inhabitants leaps from the 13,000 permanent ones to 100,000 during the high season. Located on the north coast of the State and at 129 km from the city of São Paulo, Ilhabela lies at 23°47'S and 45°24'W, having an approximate pluviometric rate of 1500 mm and an average annual temperature of 23°C, conditions which render it an excellent site for the proliferation of these mollusc hosts.

In June, 1992 a survey of these molluscs was carried out in the region with the collaboration of the Municipal Health Secretariat of Ilhabela. Eleven localities were visited, which comprised small rivers, brooks and marshes. The presence of *Biomphalaria tenagophila* was observed in one of the localities (Barra Velha – Table 1) in a big marsh measuring 150 x 100 m near the ferryboat station, surrounded by houses and a school, where both children and adults usually hunt frogs.

The snails found were collected through scooping along the marsh margins, and taken to the laboratory for identification, counting and examination of cercarial emission. Most of the 459 animals collected, whose diameter

TABLE 1
Districts of the municipality of Ilhabela where the survey on the presence of *Biomphalaria tenagophila* was performed.

District	Limnical Environment	Presence of <i>B. tenagophila</i>
Engenho D'água	lotic	no
Ituaguçu	lotic	no
Morro da Cruz	lotic	no
Praia Grande	lotic	no
Taquanduva	lotic	no
Água Branca	lentic	no
Barra Velha	lentic	yes
Camarões	lentic	no
Perequê	lentic	no
Reino	lentic	no
Saco da Capela	lentic	no

varied from 4 to 15 mm, were adults, and none of these released cercariae. Animals in a 10% sample were crushed and no sporocysts were observed. The remaining snails were brought to the laboratory in order to be reared.

The occurrence of *Biomphalaria tenagophila* in Ilhabela was mentioned in a survey². However, this municipality is not described as having breeding sites of this mollusc species^{1,3}.

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The presence of this intermediate host of schistosomiasis in Ilhabela, restricted to a single district, despite the absence of infected specimens, as well as the existence of poor general sanitation conditions, must be taken into account by the Public Health authorities, since the present situation represents the possibility of autochthonous transmission of the disease in the region, as many immigrants currently living on the island bear this disease (Municipal Health Secretariat, 1992, personal communication).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank the Municipal Health Secretariat for the financial support and infrastructure that made the work possible.

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Recebido para publicação em 05/09/1995

Aceito para publicação em 24/05/1996