Letter to the Editor

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Are weight, length and amount of venom related in scorpionfish?

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Dear Sir,

We are investigating an evident relationship among weight, length and the amount of glandular venom tissue collected from the dorsal spines of a scorpionfish species. The Scorpaenidae *Helicolenus dactylopterus dactylopterus* is considered dangerous and has been associated with accidents involving humans, mostly fishermen (1). While these descriptions have been widely reported, data on venoms from northeastern Atlantic species are scarce. Preliminary findings from this ongoing study suggest a positive but non-significant correlation between the animal size and the quantity and density of toxins produced. Moreover, although the size of the spines is inversely proportional to the size of individuals, it is the largest fish that has longer spines, and therefore probably causes more severe injuries. The bluemouth rockfish is a species of high commercial value and it is expected that artisanal fishermen constitute the largest risk group, which corroborates our observations that most accidents occur by negligent handling of hooked fish.

Symptom intensity varies according to the fish size and the quantity of injected venom. Consequently, accidents involving humans could represent significant economic and health problems. Therefore, it is important to perform further studies on this subject to improve the knowledge on bioactive toxins of these venoms, which may advance therapeutic techniques (2). The present text also represents the first statement on the venomous glandular tissue of a Scorpaenidae species from the northeastern Atlantic.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST
There is no conflict.

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