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RESEARCH NOTE

DISTINTICTIVE LARVAE OF *ANOPHELES ALBITARSIS* (DIPTERA: CULICIDAE)

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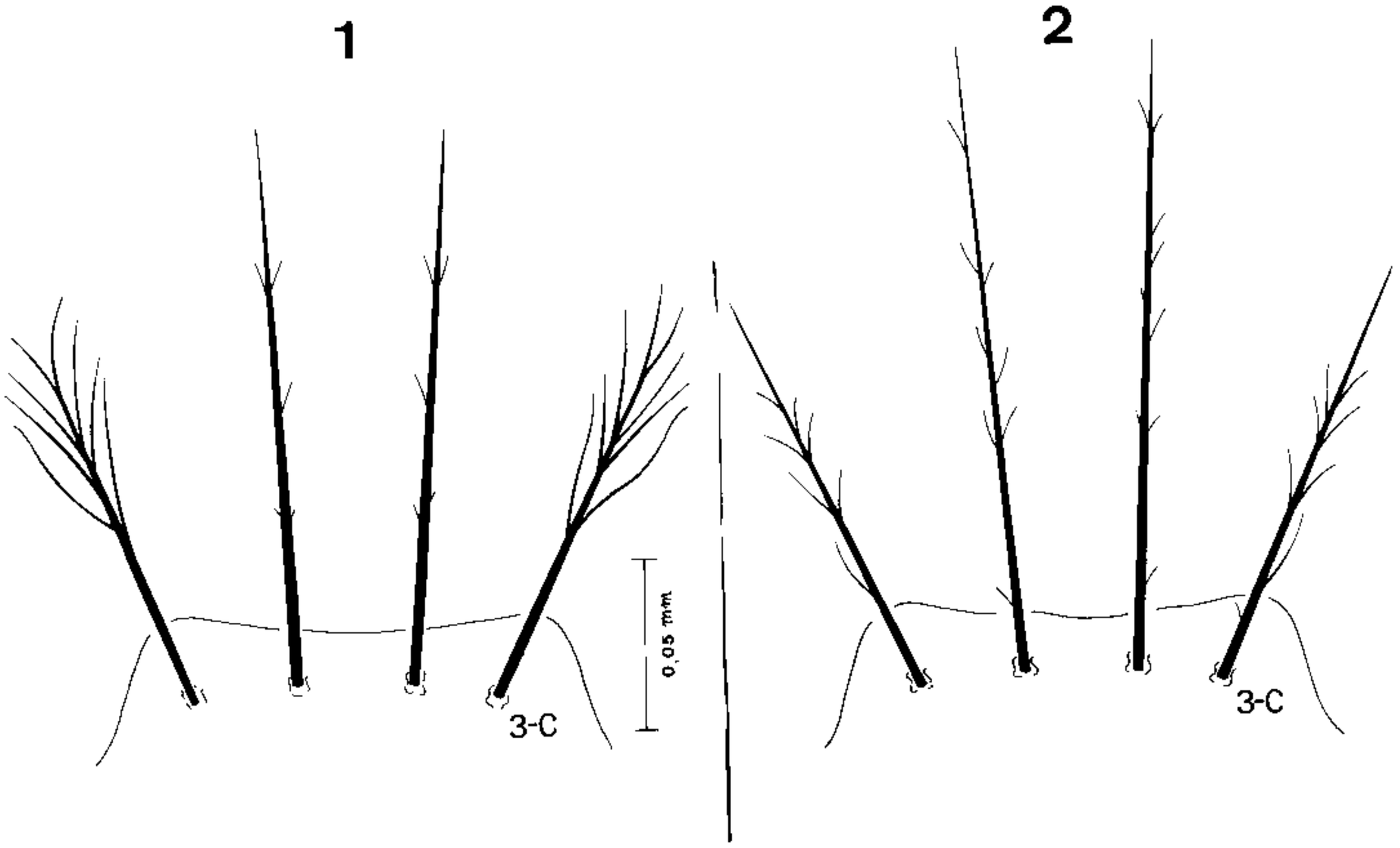
Anopheles (Nyssorhynchus) albitarsis Lynch Arribálzaga, 1878 is a mosquito that has been mentioned as behaving differently and showing a variable capacity for transmitting malaria in distinct areas of Brazil (WHO, document ref. TDR/FIELDMAL/SWG (3)/84.3). This has led to the assumption that it is not a homogenous species but possibly a complex of species or subspecies.

With the aim of elucidating this question we are carrying out morphological and biochemical studies with populations of *An. albitarsis* derived from ovipositions of specimens caught in 9 localities, including the type-locality, Baradero, Buenos Aires Province, Argentina, and the following localities in Brazil: Rio Branco (Acre State), Guajará-Mirim (Rondônia State), Boa Vista (Roraima Territory), Itaituba (Pará State), Paracuru (Ceará State), Itaguaí and Angra dos Reis (Rio de Janeiro State) and São Borja (Rio Grande do Sul State).

Up to the present, the examination of the eggs, the complete chaetotaxy of the 4th instar larvae and of the pupae and a detailed study of the adult morphology (30 specimens from



Figs. 1-2: Anterior clypeal hairs (2,3-C) of larvae of *Anopheles albitarsis*: (1) from Guajará-Mirim and Rio Branco; (2) from the type-locality, Baradero, Argentina.

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each stage), have allowed us to observe only one differential character: in the larvae of the populations from Guajará-Mirim and Rio Branco the outer anterior clypeal hairs (3-C) are definitely branched (Fig. 1), contrary to those of the larvae from the other localities, including Baradero, which are aciculate (Fig. 2).

As long ago as 1948, Deane et al. (Rev. Serv. Esp. Saúde Púb., Rio de Janeiro, 1 (4): 827-965, 1948) called attention to the branching of the outer anterior clypeal hairs of *An. albitarsis* larvae from Guajará-Mirim, in contrast to the appearance of such hairs in the larvae they had examined from numerous other localities in Brazil. We have now found a second locality, Rio Branco, about 300 kilometers from Guajará-Mirim, where the larvae have branched hairs.

It should be mentioned that, in a separate study, *An. albitarsis* larvae collected by Ricardo Lourenço-de-Oliveira from breeding places in the town of Ariquemes, also in Rondônia State, 300 kilometers distant from Guajará-Mirim, have aciculate clypeal hairs.

The significance of the finding described in this note needs to be evaluated. Isoenzyme analyses are being performed with this purpose.