

SEROPREVALENCE OF *DIROFILARIA IMMITIS* IN CATS FROM SPAIN

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INTRODUCTION:

Dirofilaria immitis is a parasitic nematode responsible of cardiopulmonary dirofilariosis. This disease is endemic in Spain, being reported in the dog in almost the whole country; furthermore, feline infections are diagnosed with increasing frequency in areas where the disease is endemic in dogs. However, cats generally tolerate heartworm infection without noticeable or only transient clinical signs; sometimes sudden death in an apparently healthy cat is the only sign.

OBJECTIVES:

First epidemiological report of the seroprevalence of *D. immitis* in cats in the whole of Spain.

RESULTS:

Overall seroprevalence: 9.65%

- The highest seroprevalence was found in the Balearic and Canary Islands (18.18-19.10%).
- Ranged from 7.14% to 11.03% on the Mediterranean coast and in the Southern communities.
- Lower seroprevalence was found in the Northern communities (2.94-5.40%).

Seropositive cats were identified in the entire territory studied.

0-5%

5-10%

10-15%

>15%

METHODS:

5.199 client-owned cats
103 veterinary centers
17 autonomous communities and
2 autonomous cities
in Spain

between September 2020 and July 2021.

Sera were analyzed for anti-*D. immitis* and anti-*Wolbachia* antibody.

CONCLUSION:

The feline population throughout Spain is exposed to and at risk of *D. immitis* infection.

It is important that veterinarians and cat owners are aware of the need to prevent dirofilariosis in cats and implement this.