Addendum: Infectious Occupational Agents

1572 CYSTIC ECHINOCOCCOSIS IN ITALY: A NEGLECTED WORK RELATED DISEASE

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Introduction Human cystic echinococcosis (CE) is a zoonotic disease caused by larval stages of cestodes (tapeworms) of the genus *Echinococcus granulosus* and it is included in the list of 17 neglected tropical diseases (WHO, 2013). CE is endemic in Italy but a surveillance system on the disease is absent and the burden is difficult to estimate. CE is listed among reportable occupational diseases: the transmission of disease is highly related to several occupations (shepherds, butchers, slaughters, veterinarians, etc.). The objective of this study was to determine the seroprevalence of CE as well as the associated risk factors.

Methods A cross-sectional study was conducted. A questionnaire was constructed and administered to 176 individuals and 176

serum samples (117 males and 59 females) were collected from shepherds in Rieti province (Lazio region), central Italy. Collected sera were assessed for anti-*E. granulosus* antibodies by Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA).

Result Seropositivity was 5.7% (95%CI=0.031–0.101). The seroprevalence appears to be higher in males (6.8%; 95%CI=0.035–0.129) than in females (3.4%; 95%CI=0.009–0.115) and in shepherds between the age group of 50-60 years (14.3%; 95%CI=0.063–0.294) than all other age groups. Farmers reported several risk practices: a) ownership of dogs (95.5%; average=5.1 dogs; SD=4.3; range from 1 to 20); b) practice home slaughtering and feeding raw offal to dogs (9.6%), c) lack of dog deworming (80.4%), d) not washing hands before eating or preparing food (53.2%) and e) poor knowledge about hydatidosis (63.6% among responders have never heard about it).

Discussion The prevention of CE must be implemented by both medical and veterinary services through epidemiological surveillance of human and animal health, risk assessment in workplace, health education programmes and working safety procedures.