

CYSTOMYIASIS BY LARVAE OF A *PSYCHODA* SP. (DIPTERA: PSYCHODIDAE): FIRST CASE FOR ARGENTINA

J. C. MARILUIS^{1,2}, P. R. MULIERI^{1,2}, L. D. PATITUCCI^{1,2}, AND A. OLIVA^{1,3}

ABSTRACT

The larvae of a *Psychoda* sp. (Diptera: Psychodidae) were found in the vagina of a 34-year-old woman with a serohaematic, malodorous discharge subsequent to pelvic pain and cervical biopsy. This occurrence, in the city of Buenos Aires, is the first recorded in Argentina. The larvae of *Psychoda* spp. usually feed upon bacterial growth inside water pipes. Their presence is interpreted as accidental, perhaps due to local infection suffered by the patient.

RÉSUMÉ

Des larves de *Psychoda* sp. (Diptera: Psychodidae) furent trouvées dans le vagin d'une femme âgée de 34 ans présentant des écoulements sérohématiques malodorants suite à des douleurs pelviennes et une biopsie cervicale. Ce cas fut d'abord rapporté dans la ville de Buenos Aires en Argentine. Les larves de *Psychoda* spp. se nourrissent habituellement de bactéries qui se multiplient dans la canalisation. Leur présence est interprétée comme accidentelle, probablement due à l'infection locale dont souffrait la patiente.

INTRODUCTION

Adults of *Psychoda* spp. (moth flies, filter flies) are common inside homes, in particular, in bathrooms and kitchens. Eggs are laid within a jelly-like mass. Larvae emerge after two days and develop quickly (1).

There are only a few occurrences of myiasis caused by larvae of the genus *Psychoda* in the literature. Two species have been recorded. A few cases of urogenital myiasis are recorded for *Psychoda albipennis* Zetterstedt: a child in Scotland in the year 1929 (1), a child in China in 1959 (2) and more recently, a 21-year-old woman in Turkey in 2004 (3). There is also a case of gastric myiasis in a woman in Japan by *Psychoda alternata* Say (1,2).

There have been no cases of cystomyiasis recorded for the Neotropical region, although cases of cystomyiasis and ophthalmomyiasis in Argentina have been observed (4). A case of gastric myiasis or pseudomyiasis by *Psychoda* sp. has been described from Chile (5).

CASE REPORT

A larva was brought to the first author for identification. The patient was a 34-year-old woman who had experienced pain in the pelvic region. In a private hospital in the city of

1. Consejo nacional de Investigaciones científicas y tecnológicas (CONICET).
2. Administración nacional de Laboratorios e Institutos de Salud (ANLIS) "Carlos G. Malbrán". Departamento de Vectores. Av. Vélez Sársfield 525. CP 1281 Ciudad autónoma de Buenos Aires, Argentina.
3. Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales. Laboratorio de Entomología Forense. Av. A. Gallardo 470. C1405DJR Ciudad autónoma de Buenos Aires, Argentina. Phone: (5411) 4982-8370. E-mail: aoliva@macn.gov.ar

Buenos Aires an injury was detected, the intrauterine device was extracted, and a cervical biopsy was performed. Because of unsatisfactory haemostasis, a gauze plug was inserted. Two days later, 19 March 2007, the patient went to the Cervical Pathology Service in the Hospital Nacional Prof. Dr. Alejandro Posadas in the province of Buenos Aires. There, the vaginal plug was taken out, and the doctors indicated that “five or six larvae from the bottom of the vaginal sack were found on it; there was a serohaematic, malodorous discharge”. Only one of the larvae was preserved in 70% ethanol.

The preserved larva belongs to the genus *Psychoda* (Psychodidae: Psychodinae). The insect’s identification was determined with the keys in Zumpt (2) and Guimaraes *et al.* (6).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is well documented that the larvae of *Psychoda* spp. develop in damp places such as air conditioning units (7). They are not, therefore, obligate parasites. This makes their presence in a body cavity difficult to explain.

The hypothesis which appears most probable is that the patient might have suffered from a local infection, which attracted an ovigerous female and stimulated it to an oviposition that very probably was abnormal. The physicians observed approximately “five or six” larvae which may be attributed to the presence of ten to twelve eggs, while a normal oviposition may contain “20 to 100 or more” eggs (1).

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