

## SOME BIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF *PHLEBOTOMUS PERNICIOSUS* SPECIES FROM ARAGON (N. E. of SPAIN)

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Leishmaniasis is nowadays an endemic disease in the whole Mediterranean Basin. An entomological survey has been carried out in Aragon during the last eight years with the aim of gathering data on the vectors of Leishmaniasis caused by *Leishmania infantum*, as well as on their geographical distribution.

The method used for sampling adult sandflies was sticky traps. Sheets of 20 by 20 cm (Vellum 80 gr.) smeared with castor oil were placed in collecting sites during the activity period of the sandflies. These collecting sites showed a wide range of habitats from natural sites (little caves, holes and cracks in rocks or ground, barbicans of retaining walls) to holes in garden walls, dwellings, shelters, sheds....

Only two species belonging to subgenus *Larrousius* (Nitzulescu, 1931), the subgenus involved in the transmission of *L. infantum* in the Southwest part of Europe, were identified in Aragon: *Phlebotomus perniciosus* Newstead, 1911 and *Phlebotomus ariasi* Tonnoir, 1921.

Species distribution was not homogeneous and differences in density between both species were found in the studied area according to the degree of urbanization. In two of the studied foci of Leishmaniasis in our region *P. perniciosus* appeared as the most abundant species in suburban and periurban areas (associated with human settlements) whereas *P. ariasi* was more related to country places.

Such a fact led us to establish a *P. perniciosus* colony in our laboratory in order to study thoroughly further aspects of its biology as well as the setting-up of future measures of control against this vector.

Aspects of colony-maintenance procedures and biological parameters of this species are also displayed in the poster.