

Cats carry all types of ticks and tick-borne diseases

Thursday, September 21, 2017

<http://danielcameronmd.com/cats-carry-types-ticks-tick-borne-diseases/>

by Daniel J. Cameron, MD, MPH

In the article “*Borrelia miyamotoi*, Other Vector-Borne Agents in Cat Blood and Ticks in Eastern Maryland,” Shannon and colleagues describe their study in which 160 ticks and blood samples were collected from 70 healthy cats brought to the Mid Atlantic Cat Hospital in Queenstown, Maryland.

The cats were found to be carrying three species of ticks including 83 Lone Star ticks (*Amblyomma americanum*), 7 American dog ticks (*Dermacentor variabilis*) and 70 black-legged ticks (*Ixodes scapularis*.) [1] Out of the 160 ticks, 22 (13.8%) tested positive by PCR for *Bartonella* spp., *Borrelia burgdorferi*, or *Borrelia miyamotoi*, according to the authors.

However, due to insufficient sample quantities, only 25 of the 70 cats were able to be fully tested. Nine of those cats (36%) were positive for exposure to at least one of the following tick-borne pathogens: *Borrelia burgdorferi*, *Ehrlichia ewingii*, *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*, *Borrelia miyamotoi*, *Bartonella clarridgeae* and *Bartonella henselae*. “We also found at least one cat blood sample to test positive for antibodies to each of the four tick-borne agents we screened for,” Shannon states.

According to the authors' review of the literature, the risk to pet owners is unclear. “Pet ownership has been implicated in vector-borne pathogen transmission and has been identified as a potential risk factor for such diseases in some studies, but not others.”

Nevertheless, screening for ticks may prove helpful, providing advanced warning of disease risk to humans “upon recognition of an uncommon or unexpected pathogen in a pet or pet-derived parasite,” Shannon concludes.

References:

1. Shannon AB, Rucinsky R, Gaff HD, Brinkerhoff RJ. *Borrelia miyamotoi*, Other Vector-Borne Agents in Cat Blood and Ticks in Eastern Maryland. EcoHealth. 2017.

Cats carry all types of ticks and tick-borne diseases - <http://danielcameronmd.com/cats-carry-types-ticks-tick-borne-diseases/>