

P1295 *Tropheryma whipplei* colonization in Italian and migrant population

Anna Beltrame*¹, Andrea Ragusa¹, Francesca Perandin¹, Fabio Formenti¹, Florence Fenollar², Sophie Edouard², Maureen Laroche², Giorgio Zavarise³, Francesco Doro³, Didier Raoult², Zeno Bisoffi⁴

¹Sacro Cuore Don Calabria Hospital, Centre for Tropical Diseases, Negrar, Italy, ²Aix Marseille Université, Unité de Recherche en Maladies Infectieuses et Tropicales Emergentes (URMITE), Marseille, France, ³Sacro Cuore Don Calabria Hospital, Pediatria, Negrar, Italy, ⁴Sacro Cuore Don Calabria Hospital, Centre for Tropical Diseases, Negrar, Italy

Background: Prevalence of *Tropheryma whipplei* colonization seems to vary according to geographic area, age of population analysed and symptoms reported. In Europe, fecal colonization is estimated to be 2-3% in asymptomatic people increasing to 15-36% in children < 6 years old with gastroenteritis. In rural West Africa and Asia, the prevalence in the same age group is higher: 27.5% (Ghana), 36% (Gabon), 48% (Laos). In Senegal, 30% of children of 5-10 years old and 75% of children \leq 2 years old resulted colonized by *T. whipplei*.

Materials/methods: From February 2014 to April 2016, 1240 stool specimens from patients underwent parasitological molecular analysis at the Centre for Tropical Diseases of Negrar (Northeastern Italy). One gram of each stool sample was stored at -20°C. The samples underwent a specific quantitative real-time PCR for detection of *T. whipplei* (Marseille, France). We retrospectively review the data of the positive patients.

Results: Overall, 85 (6.9%) patients analyzed had a stool sample with a positive PCR result: 61 (71.8%) patients were male, had a median age of 26.6 years (IQR, 8.7-39 years). Sixty-five (76.5%) of them resulted infected by parasites. Chronic abdominal pain was the only symptom associated with *T. whipplei* ($p=0.04$). The prevalence of *T. whipplei* was 12.7% ($n=23/181$) for children < 10 years of age, 6.7% ($n=24/356$) for those 10 - 29 years of age, 6.1% ($n=24/394$) for those 30 - 49 years of age, and 4.5% ($n=14/309$) for those \geq 50 years of age. The prevalence was 4.9% ($n=34/694$) for Italian population and 9.3% ($n=51/546$) for migrants. In the population of migrants, children < 10 years of age had higher prevalence than older (17.3% vs 7.3%, $p=0.003$), whereas no difference was found in the two Italian population age groups (5.6% vs 4.8%, $p=0.770$). The prevalence was higher in children < 10 years of age from Latin America (25%) than those found in children from Africa or Asia (19.3%, 11.1% respectively).

Conclusions: We found a high prevalence of *T. whipplei* intestinal colonization in migrants < 10 years of age. This is a preliminary study to prospective, clinic and diagnostic study.