RESEARCH NOTE

Prevalence of *Toxocara canis* and *Toxascaris leonina* ova in dog faeces deposited on the streets of Leeds

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The first four cases of larval granulomatosis of the human retina due to *Toxocara* in Great Britain were reported by Ashton in 1960. This created concern regarding levels of canine infection and a number of surveys have since been carried out. The surveys have centred on London and the surrounding area (Home Counties) and have largely entailed post-mortem or faecal examination of dogs in homes or in quarantine. Only one survey involving the examination of canine faeces deposited on city streets has been undertaken. This was by Brown and Stammers (1922) in London.

The present survey was carried out to determine the prevalence of *Toxocara canis* ova in dog faeces deposited on the streets of Leeds and to compare the results with those from London. Seventy-five canine faecal samples were collected from residential streets within a half mile radius of the University of Leeds. Samples were selected randomly, and were collected only if undamaged. As Borg and Woodruff (1973) demonstrated the presence of infective helminth ova in the soil, samples of soil from parks and public places within the area were also examined.

Examination of faeces and samples of soil for ova was carried out using a standard zinc sulphate flotation method. Samples of ova recovered were incubated at room temperature (24°C) in order to assess viability.

*Toxocara canis* ova were found in 13.3% of the samples examined and ova of *Toxascaris leonina* in 20%. Of 14 soil samples examined, one contained ova of *Toxocara canis* and one ova of *Toxascaris leonina*. Larvae developed in ova recovered from all positive faecal and soil samples after incubation.

The prevalence of *Toxocara canis* in Leeds is similar to that reported for London and the Home Counties (Sloan, quoted by Oldham, 1965; Woodruff et al., 1964). The prevalence of *Toxascaris leonina* is, however, far higher than figures recorded in other surveys, being twice as high as those recorded by Sloan (1965).

It would appear that a potential health hazard from *Toxocara canis* is present in Leeds, and it is possible that the high prevalence of *Toxascaris leonina* could also be a hazard although it is thought to occur only rarely in man (Grinberg, 1961).

These results, although based on a limited survey, nevertheless underline the need for the implementation of the control measures put forward by Woodruff (1976).
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REFERENCES


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