

Case report

Picture story

Male and female filarial worms *Dirofilaria (Nochtiella) repens* recovered from the scrotum

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Introduction

Human dirofilariasis due to *Dirofilaria (Nochtiella) repens* of dogs is a common zoonotic infection in Sri Lanka. The first human infection in Sri Lanka was reported in 1962 in a 15-year old boy who had a live worm removed from the chest wall (1). Since then 84 cases have been reported and they include three expatriates from Russia, England and Korea who were infected in Sri Lanka (2). About 60% of dogs in Sri Lanka are infected with *D repens*.

Case report

A 3-year old boy was brought to the National Hospital of Sri Lanka with two painless lumps in the right scrotal sac. Several specialists had treated the child with tablets and creams, but the swellings had gradually increased in size. There was a history of contact with dogs, and several monkeys lived in the vicinity of the child's home. The child

had normal blood counts and a thick blood smear done at night was negative for microfilariae.

The swellings were incised under general anaesthesia and each swelling contained a live worm. The longer female worm was found in the larger swelling situated at the upper end of the scrotum and the smaller male worm was in the lower swelling. The female worm was 12.55 cm long, with a maximum width of 594.7 μm , characteristic longitudinal ridges, a vulva 1574.1 μm from the anterior end and ova, but no microfilariae. The male was 4.48 cm long, with a maximum width of 379 μm , and characteristic spicules. Careful examination excluded the possibility that the parasite was *D Linstowi* which infects monkeys.

This is the first time in the world that both a male and female worm have been found in the same anatomical site at the same time.

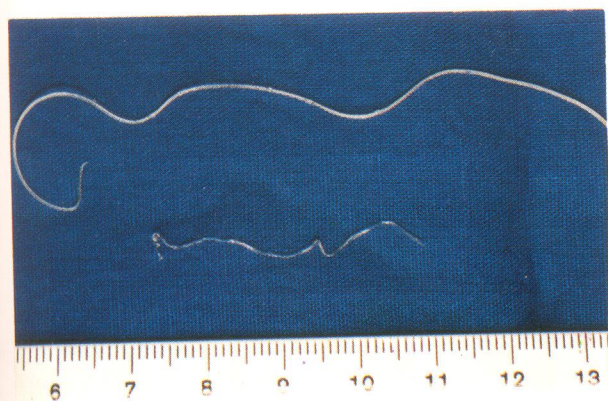


Figure 1. Male and female worms of *Dirofilaria (Nochtiella) repens* recovered from scrotum (scale cm.)

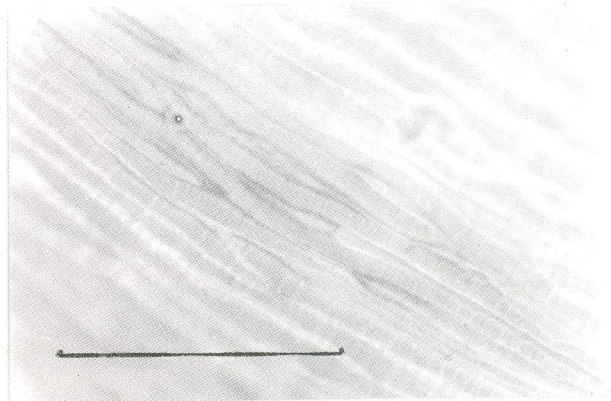


Figure 2. Surface of female worm showing longitudinal ridges (Bar = 100 mm.)

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The high price of bad government (2)

Sen, who won a Nobel prize in economics for his work on the causes of famine, notes that for long-run economic development, what counts most is the pursuit of a few key policies – regarding education, basic health care, land reform, the availability of credit – and that if those policies are pursued, the nature of the political system is irrelevant: the country will haul itself out of poverty. Conversely, if they are not pursued, the nature of the political system remains irrelevant: the country will stay poor. That is how authoritarian China was able to outstrip democratic India for decades.

J Rohwer. The high price of bad government. *Fortune* 2000; **142**: 30.