

# Cysticercosis in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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Cysticercosis, caused by *Taenia solium* eggs, is a zoonotic disease whose consequences can be severe especially in the cerebral localisation (neurocysticercosis). Indeed, neurocysticercosis is the first cause of epilepsy amongst the infectious etiology group. Following the increase of epilepsy cases in Kinshasa and Bas-Congo, it was important to assess the fraction attributable to neurocysticercosis especially as data on cysticercosis in Democratic Republic Of Congo (DRC) dating from 1970.

A joint study between veterinary and human doctors was conducted in the provinces of Bas-Congo and Kinshasa between 2008 and 2010. Blood samples were collected from the general population, patients with epilepsy and pigs. These samples were analysed using ELISA antigen in the laboratory of the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp. Patients positive to ELISA antigen took the CT scan exam for the confirmation of neurocysticercosis. In the province of Kinshasa, of 530 epileptic patients, 6.3% were identified as neurocysticercosis cases. Out of a total of 498 pigs, 38.9% were positive for cysticercosis. In the province of Bas-Congo, of 943 inhabitants from Malanga village, 21.6% were positive with predominance in males (26.4% versus 17.5%). A total of 145 pigs from 5 villages were examined and 41.2% found positive.

We can conclude that cysticercosis in the DRC has been neglected for a long time and cysticercosis could be a real major public health problem. Prospective studies addressing the consequences of cysticercosis in communities are needed in order to prevent epilepsy due to neurocysticercosis.