Rickettsia and Vector Biodiversity of Spotted Fever Focus, Atlantic Rain Forest Biome, Brazil

To the Editor: Rickettsia rickettsii, R. felis, and R. parkeri, strain Atlantic rainforest, have been characterized after being found in areas to which Brazilian spotted fever (BSF) is endemic (1,2), which indicates the complexity of their epidemic and enzootic cycles. The Atlantic rain forest is one of the largest and richest biomes of Brazil, and antropic action has intensely influenced its transformation. Most BSF cases and all BSF-related deaths are recorded in this biome area. Many BSF cases were recorded in Pará (1,2), Roraima (3), and Amazonas (4), which Brazilian spotted fever (BSF) is endemic (1,2), which indicates the complexity of their epidemic and enzootic cycles. The Atlantic rain forest is one of the largest and richest biomes of Brazil, and antropic action has intensely influenced its transformation. Most BSF cases and all BSF-related deaths are recorded in this biome area. Many BSF cases were recorded in Pará (1,2), Roraima (3), and Amazonas (4).
for gltA 834 bp and 4 for ompA primer set (online Technical Appendix Figure, wwwnc.cdc.gov/EID/article/20/3/13-1013-Techapp1.pdf). The sequences were deposited in GenBank; BLASTn analysis (http://blast.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/blast.cgi) indicates that these sequences belong to AG (ancestral) or SFG rickettsiae (Figure).

In phylogenetic inferences, 8 samples were grouped with SFG R. rickettsii, supported by bootstrap value >62%. In addition, 3 samples were closely related to SFG R. felis, strongly supported by bootstrap values >99%; Rickettsia sp. LIC2937Ac was closely related to AG R. bellii under a bootstrap support >99% (Figure).

Epidemic manifestations of rickettsial diseases vary by ecotope characteristics, human activity, and vector bioecology in natural foci. BSF is a clinically distinct rickettsial infection in foci to which it is endemic. BSF-related illness and death vary by the Rickettsia species that can coexist in a given area and

![Figure](https://example.com/figure.png)

**Figure.** Phylogenetic inferences by neighbor-joining method from 1,000 replicated trees based on partial sequence of the *Rickettsia gltA* gene (CS2 401 bp). Evolutionary distances were estimated by the Kimura 2-parameter model. Bootstrap values >80% are shown (neighbor-joining/maximum-parsimony). Sequences obtained are in boldface, and GenBank accession numbers are in parentheses, followed by the similarity percentage (BLAST, http://blast.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov), the locality acronym (PO, Porciúncula; RP, São José do Vale do Rio Preto; TM, Trajano de Moraes; IP, Itaperuna; VR, Volta Redonda; PI, Piraí), the arthropod vector species, the composition of the sample (L, larvae; N, nymph; F, female; M, male), and the host. Scale bar indicates nucleotide substitutions per site.
that can share or not share epidemiologic elements.

Molecular identification of *R. rickettsii* in *A. cajennense* ticks was recorded only in the Paraiba do Sul River basin of southeastern Brazil (8), as confirmed in our study. This eco-epidemiologic aspect, its great anthropophily, and its presence in all municipalities surveyed, with absolute frequency greater than other species, demonstrates the possible effect of this tick on epidemic cycle development for the analyzed region, which does not seem to occur in other regions.

*R. rickettsii* infection of *A. dubitatum* ticks in the 1 focus analyzed might indicate its relevance in specific epidemiologic scenarios. We detected highly similar sequences of different species of *Rickettsia* (PLIC2937A) in the same *A. dubitatum* tick specimen (Figure). Other studies have recorded multiple *Rickettsia* infections in 1 tick specimen (9,10).

Our finding of *C. felis* fleas in 6 of the 7 outbreaks investigated highlights the possible role of this flea in maintaining *Rickettsia* in Rio de Janeiro state. *C. felis* and *C. canis* fleas infected with *R. rickettsii* seem to confirm this potential. Nevertheless, the real epidemiologic value of this report in the BSF cycle deserves to be further investigated.

Our results indicate that dogs and horses are the primary vertebrae in the *Rickettsia* enzootic cycle in the investigated focus, and, considering their common presence in human environments, they must be important in maintaining possible rickettsial vectors to humans. These results contribute to the mapping of BSF-endemic areas and to the understanding of the circulation and epidemiology of *Rickettsia* sp. in an area with one of the highest fatal concentrations of BSF.

Acknowledgments

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Author affiliations: Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil (N.O. Moura-Martiniano, K.M. Cardoso, F.S. Gehrze, A.C. Fogaça, T.T.S. Schumaker); Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (E. Machado-Ferreira, C.A.G. Soares); and Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, Rio de Janeiro (Maria Amorim, G.S. Gazêta)

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Address for correspondence: Nicole O. Moura-Martiniano. Lab. de Referência Nacional em Vetores das Riquetsioses, Instituto Oswaldo Cruz–Fiocruz, Av. Brazil 4365, Pav. Lauro Travassos, anexo posterior/sala 08, Manguinhos, Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, CEP: 21.045-900, Brazil; email: nicmoura@ioe.fiocruz.br

**Atypical Streptococcus suis in Man, Argentina, 2013**

To the Editor: *Streptococcus suis* is a major swine pathogen and an emerging zoonotic agent that causes mainly meningitis and septic shock (1,2). Among the 35 described
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Technical Appendix

Technical Appendix Figure. A) Phylogenetic inferences by neighbor-joining method from 1,000 replicated trees based on partial sequence of the gltA gene (CS4 834 bp). Evolutionary distances were estimated by Kimura 2-parameter model. Bootstrap values >60% are shown (neighbor-joining/maximum parsimony). Sequences obtained are in bold, and the GenBank accession numbers are in parentheses, followed by the similarity percentage (BLAST, http://blast.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov), the locality acronym (PO, Porciúncula; PI, Piraí), the arthropod vector species, the composition of the sample (F, female) and the host. B) Phylogenetic inferences by neighbor-joining method from 1,000 replicated trees based on partial sequence of the ompA gene. Evolutionary distances were estimated by using the Kimura 2-parameter model. Bootstrap values >60% are shown (neighbor-joining/maximum-parsimony). Sequences obtained are presented in bold, and the GenBank accession numbers are in parentheses, followed by the similarity percentage (BLAST), the locality acronym (PO, Porciúncula; RP, São José do Vale do Rio Preto; PI, Piraí), the arthropod vector species, the composition of the sample (F, female), and the host. Scale bar indicates nucleotide substitutions per site.