

NEUTROPHILS AND EOSINOPHILS RELATED TO THE PRESENCE OF *Leishmania infantum* AMASTIGOTES IN THE GUT OF DOGS

(NEUTRÓFILOS E EOSINÓFILOS RELACIONADOS COM A PRESENÇA DE AMASTIGOTAS DE Leishmania infantum NO INTESTINO DE CÃES)

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This study aims at determining the presence of neutrophils and eosinophils in the intestinal region of dogs naturally infected with *Leishmania infantum* in the presence and absence of the parasite. We analyzed 11 dogs positive for Canine Visceral Leishmaniasis (CVL) that were diagnosed and euthanized by the Centro de Controle de Zoonoses (CCZ) in Ilha Solteira, SP. The animals were divided into two groups: dogs infected with LVC and the presence of *Leishmania* amastigotes in the intestine (P, n = 5) and dogs infected with CVL, but without the parasite in the gut (N, n = 6). Histological sections of the small intestine (duodenum, jejunum and ileum) and the large intestine (colon) were stained with H&E and submitted to immunohistochemistry for the identification of cells, and parasite, respectively. Cell was quantified as 10 villus crypt units (VCUs) of the duodenum, jejunum, ileum and colon of each animal. It was found that the tissues of dogs most infected with amastigotes (group E) had fewer neutrophils and eosinophils compared to those animals with lower parasitic degree or absence of amastigotes. Furthermore, two dogs with bloody diarrhea had lower number of parasites, but the number of polymorphic cells was higher, indicating that the acute intestinal infection was not related to the presence of the parasite on the gut wall.

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