REPORT ON THE INFESTATION OF HAEMAPHYSALIS SP TICK IN MAN

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INTRODUCTION
Ticks are the most important vectors of diseases affecting both human beings and animals (Sonenshine, 1991). In human beings, ticks can cause conditions such as paralysis, toxicosis, irritation, allergy apart from and their ability to transmit variety of infectious diseases which is of major public health concern. The tick toxicosis is a condition caused by many of the Ixodid sp. of hard ticks, of which Haemaphysalis sp. a three host tick, affects a wide range of host that includes cattle, sheep, horse, dog, wild mammals and birds. Seldom, the Ixodid tick infests man having close proximity with animal houses. The present paper reports the incidence of Haemaphysalis sp. infestation in a man.

MATERIALS AND METHODS
An adult man (sixty six year old) visited his farm house located in Hasanur, Thimmam forest area of Erode district during a week end and had a overnight sleep in his tented farm house. After a week, he felt the presence of an abnormal growth in the external lower part below the right eye and got admitted himself to a hospital at Coimbatore on the advice of a dermatologist during December 2012 with a history of restlessness, disturbed sleep, itching, inflammation, swelling, pain and irritation besides right eye. On closer examination by the dermatologist, a nymphal stage of a tick was found attached. The tick was removed carefully and sent to the Department of Veterinary Parasitology, Veterinary College and Research Institute, Namakkal for further processing and
identification. The nymphal tick was boiled in 10 per cent Sodium hydroxide, cooled, dehydrated in ascending grades of alcohol (70%, 90% and absolute alcohol), cleared in carbolic acid and mounted in DPX.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The morphology of the nymphal stage of the tick was studied as per methodology of Soulsby (1982) and the tick was identified as *Haemaphysalis sp.* Infestation of either hard or soft ticks occur in persons living in close proximity with animal houses and farms. Larvae feed on small mammals and birds including poultry, while nymphs infest larger animals apart from infesting man and monkeys. *Haemaphysalis sp.* being a three host tick, the nymphal stage might have attached to the second host preferably the man in this report, instead of attaching on animals and started blood feeding and thus causing the clinical condition. Initially, the individual was not able to observe the presence of the nymphal stage except for mild scratching. Only after a week, when the nymph started to feed on blood, the individual was able to observe the presence of an arthropod attached to his skin.

*Haemaphysalis spinigera* is a hard tick common in India and Sri Lanka, and nymphs of which avidly bite man (Banerjee, 1988). Human beings who visit forest areas to collect firewood or those working in adjacent fields are at a higher risk of tick infestation and thus contracting Kyasanur Forest Disease. Reports on *Haemaphysalis sp.* tick bite in human being is reported in Japan by Maeoka *et al.* (1990) and Seishima *et al.* (2000). Similarly, Arunachalam and Harikrishnan (2009) reported the occurrence on the infestation of *Haemaphysalis sp.* in a child in Tamil Nadu.

CONCLUSION
Tick infestation is common in people dwelling near forest areas, people entering into forests for occupational purposes and tourists who go into forests for camping, trekking and other recreational purposes. Ticks of *Haemaphysalis sp.* are found to attack human beings more commonly. Therefore extreme care should be taken while entering into forest areas inhabited by ticks. Proper clothing, use of acaricidal sprays, wearing of boots, wearing light colored clothing (to identify attached ticks if any) are some precautionary measures to be taken. It is always stay away from forest areas which are known for the presence of ticks attacking human beings.

REFERENCES

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