



P 21 Prevalence of three zoonotic *Babesia* species in *Ixodes ricinus* nymphs in a suburban forest in Switzerland

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Ixodes ricinus is the vector of various *Babesia* spp. pathogenic for humans. In Switzerland, 3 of them, *Babesia divergens*, *B. venatorum* (*Babesia* EU1), and *B. microti* have been reported in *I. ricinus* ticks from various geographic areas.

The aim of this study was to determine how frequently these *Babesia* species infect *I. ricinus* nymphs in a suburban forest and to determine their prevalence over 3 years along a pathway delimited in 4 different sections. Overall, *Babesia* spp. were detected in 1.7% of 2568 *I. ricinus* nymphs using reverse line blot. *B. venatorum* was infecting 1.1% of nymphs, *B. divergens* 0.2%, and *B. microti* 0.7%. *B. microti* was significantly less frequent in ticks in 2008 than in 2006 and 2007.

The presence of these 3 medically relevant *Babesia* species in a suburban forest where *I. ricinus* tick density is high requires some attention from physicians, particularly for patients presenting with unspecific symptoms and for patients who are immuno-compromised, and who have a history of contact with tick biotopes.