



P 31 Tick-bites prevention used by the inhabitants of Lower Silesia (Poland)

Dorota Kiewra, Katarzyna Rydzanicz

University of Wrocław, Institute of Genetics and Microbiology, Dept. of Microbial Ecology and Environmental Protection; Przybyszewskiego 63/77, 51-148 Wrocław, Poland

(e-mail: dorota.kiewra@microb.uni.wroc.pl)

Tick control in nature is very difficult and has rarely been applied. Therefore, the individual protection is one of the basic tick-borne disease prevention methods. The aim of the research was to estimate the individual tick-borne disease prevention among 215 residents of Lower Silesia (Poland) based on surveys conducted in April 2009. According to the respondents, the most frequently used methods were repellents (21.0%), appropriate clothing (15.6%), or both methods simultaneously (6.3%). However, only 44.2% respondents used prevention methods. There were no statistical differences in the use of prophylaxis between women and men ($\chi^2=1.16$, $p=0.2806$) as well as between the inhabitants of villages and towns ($\chi^2=1.37$, $p=0.2414$). Biology students more frequently used prophylactics than other respondents (76.7% and 35.6% respectively) ($\chi^2=18.05$, $p<0.001$). The differences in prophylactics were also observed in the case of people's awareness about the serious symptoms of Lyme borreliosis (LB, the most often recorded TBD). People consider LB as a serious and long illness (50% of respondents), half of them used prophylactics; while only 26% among the others. Our research showed insufficient awareness about tick bite prevention. Increasing public awareness through environmental education directed to the general public would be essential to achieve a widespread use of individual tick-borne disease prevention. Such education is particularly important because the presence of *Ixodes ricinus*, the most important vector of tick-borne diseases in Europe, is recorded not only in forested areas, but also in the closest neighborhood, i.e. in urban parks and gardens. The systematic increase in the number of LB cases (27.1 cases LB per 100,000 inhabitants in Poland in 2009; www.pzh.gov.pl) underlines the importance of the problem.