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Media alert from the Media Scanning & Verification Cell, IDSP-NCDC.



Alert ID	Publication Date	Reporting Date	Place Name	News Source/Publication Language
3313	11.03.2016	11.03.2016	Kochi Kerala	www.thehindu.com/English http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Kochi/rare-zoonosis-detected-in-12yearold/article8339326.ece?css=print
Title:	Rare zoonosis detected in 12-year-old in district Kochi, Kerala			
Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC	Information communicated to DSU-Kochi, SSU-Kerala			

A rare zoonosis was detected by a paediatrician at a private clinic in the city. It was identified as Dirofilariasis or the dog heartworm by a pathologist at a private hospital.

A 12-year-old girl in the city had reached the clinic of M. Narayanan with swelling of around 1-cm diameter over the breast bone. While numerous tests failed to identify the cause, an ultrasound of the area detected a live worm in the swelling on the chest.

The worm was surgically removed by a team led by paediatric surgeon P.S. Binu at the Ernakulam Medical Centre. The worm, alive at the time of removal, was identified by the pathologist and the microbiologist of the hospital as belonging to the species of *Dirofilaria repens*.

Dr. Narayanan, who is the president of the district branch of the Indian Academy of Paediatrics, told The Hindu that steps were being taken to inform the District Medical Officer and get the worm identified by experts in government institutions.

"The zoonosis is transmitted from dogs to humans through mosquitoes, and all known mosquito species found here that are vectors of communicable diseases, such

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**Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), National Centre for Disease Control,
Ministry Of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India**

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as Anopheles, Culex and Aedes aegypti, are capable of transmitting the larvae of Dirofilaria," said Dr. Narayanan.

"However, there is no cause for panic as the incidence of the infection is rare and no threat to life has been reported so far. The larvae that get transmitted from dogs has not been found to reproduce in human bodies," said Dr. Narayanan.

Adult worms usually settle in lungs, eyes and subcutaneous tissues, and produce symptoms such as cough, pain and swellings. "When the lesions are in the subcutaneous tissues or eyes, diagnosis and surgical treatment are easier. When the worms settle in the lungs, detection and treatment are difficult," he added. Chest X-rays of the worm lesion sometimes mimic lung cancer. The treatment involves the surgical removal of the worm with the surrounding tissue.

So far, mosquito-borne communicable diseases have been identified as dengue, malaria, filariasis, chikungunya and Japanese B encephalitis. Only few cases of Dirofilaria have been identified. In fact, the worm completes its whole cycle in the dog's body itself. It is the exposure to mosquitoes that lets the larvae in the dog's blood stream enter the mosquito, which may further transmit it to the human body.

About seven to 24 per cent of the domestic dog population in the State harbours this larva in their blood. The carriage rate in stray dogs has not been studied. The rate of carriage in them would be higher considering their increased exposure to mosquitoes.

The first case from the State was reported in 1976. About 800 cases have been reported worldwide, said Dr. Narayanan. Dirofilaria could be considered an emerging zoonosis because of the abundance of domestic and stray dogs and the mosquito population. "Mosquito control is the best preventive strategy," he added.

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