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Evidence of Crimean-Congo Haemorrhagic Fever Virus Occurrence in Ixodidae ticks of Armenia

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Background: CCHF causes serious health problems in humans. Though ticks of the genera *Hyalomma* play a significant role in the disease transmission it was also found in 31 other species. The first detection of CCHFV in Armenia refers to 1970s. Since that there are no published data about CCHF in the country.

Materials and Methods: Totally, 1412 ticks from 8 localities in Armenia were sampled and tested for the presence of CCHFV antigen via ELISA test.

Results: From 359 tick pools 132 found to be CCHFV antigen-positive. From 6 tick species, *Rhipicephalu. Sanguineus* was the most prevalent one (37.9%). Among those, three species (*R. sanguineus*, *R. annulatus*, *H. marginatum*) were positive for the presence of CCHFV antigen. *Dermacentor marginatus* and *Ixodes ricinus* revealed no positive pools, but both showed suspicious reactions. Interestingly *R.sanguineus* showed also the highest infection rate of CCHFV– 50%, meanwhile only 1 of 17 *H. marginatus* pools was positive.

Conclusion: For the first time in the last decades CCHFV antigen was detected in Ixodid ticks of Armenia. This finding revealed *Rhipicephalus spp.* having a greater role in the disease epidemiology, but also not exclude the involvement of *H. marginatum* in the CCHF virus circulation in Armenia.