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Detection of hepatitis E virus (HEV) by real time PCR, in pig livers from local groceries in Comunidad Valenciana (Spain)

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Hepatitis E virus (HEV) is the agent responsible of hepatitis E, which in most cases is a self-limiting disease, being the fecal-oral route the main way of transmission. HEV is a major cause of outbreaks and sporadic cases of acute hepatitis in developing countries, mainly by the consumption of contaminated water. It is considered an emerging zoonotic disease and an increasing cause of acute hepatitis in industrialized countries such as Spain. The swine plays an important role, since according to the latest researches, it has been confirmed that it acts as a reservoir of the disease, and therefore as a potential source of infection for the human population. The swine industry is of primary importance in the geographical area where this study was conducted (Comunidad Valenciana). The aim of this study was to evaluate presence of HEV in swine livers sold in local groceries. For this purpose, 106 samples (swine livers), were collected from different butchers of Alicante and Valencia and tested for the presence of HEV RNA by real time RT-PCR. HEV was detected in 8 (7.55%) from 106 samples analyzed, supporting the presence of HEV in swine meat products. The results obtained in this study suggest an existing risk of HEV infection if raw or undercooked swine meat products are consumed.

Keywords: HEV, hepatitis E, livers, swine, food safety.

Biography

Mario Garcia Andres has completed his PhD at Cardenal Herrera CEU University at 2013. He is professor in Molecular Genetics and Biotechnology since 2007 at the faculty of Veterinary and member of one of the most important researching groups in hepatitis E virus (HEV), headed by Dra. Pérez Gracia, with a high number of papers published in this issue. At the present time, Dr. Garcia is conducting several studies about the presence of HEV in food and environment.

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