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First finding of antibodies to *Encephalitozoon cuniculi* in raised chickens in Egypt

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In the present study, the presence of antibodies against *Encephalitozoon cuniculi* in chickens of different breeds were investigated by the method of enzyme linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA). A total number of 88 serum samples were collected randomly from chickens raised in houses and commercial farms in different locations of Behera province, Egypt. The breeds sampled included Egyptian native breed (balai) chickens (n=35), commercial egg-laying (Hy-line) breed (n=40) and commercial broiler Sasso breed (n=13). The age of the tested birds ranged from one month to 20 months. Antibodies against *E. cuniculi* were detected in 13/88 (14.77%) of sera examined. *E. cuniculi* antibodies were detected only in the sera of egg-laying chickens. Results of this study indicate that chickens are exposed to *E. cuniculi* infection in Egypt. These results are of epidemiological relevance and public health importance; as the presence of *E. cuniculi* in raised chickens indicates a risk of infection to humans, mainly chicken breeders. Therefore, routine screening examinations of large-scale breeding of chickens are advised considering the zoonotic potential of these parasites.

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