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Genetic Epidemiology and Pathogenesis of Spirorchiid Infection in Green Sea Turtles

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Abstract

Globally, spirorchiid blood fluke infections have an impact on endangered turtle populations, and they have been linked to a high mortality rate in Queensland green sea turtles. Both the flukes and their ova are harmful and can cause their host to become stranded or die. Ovarian-associated brain lesions, which have been linked to host neurological impairments, are of particular interest. Due to difficulties in the physical identification of adults of some genera and a lack of species-level identifying markers for eggs, it is challenging to make accurate estimates of illness frequency and the relative effect of infection linked to various spirorchiid species. In order to find and identify cryptic spirorchiids and their ova in Queensland green sea turtle tissues collected from 2011 to 2014, a newly developed molecular assay was applied. To look into pathology, tissue tropisms, and epidemiology. Eight spirorchiid genotypes, comprising numerous tissues for each, were found in 14 different tissues. The data instead indicate that a significant part of eggs are lost in dead end tissues; we were unable to identify a distinctive pathway for the eggs to reach the outside. Granulomas, which can affect most organs in varied degrees of severity, were the most frequent lesions seen, followed by arteritis and thrombi in the major vessels.

Keywords: Spirorchiid; Granulomas; Granulomatous; Caryospora

Introduction

The prevalence and severity of granulomatous lesions were associated with an increase in the types of spirorchiids that were found. The brain, however, displayed relatively modest levels of spirorchiid variety when compared to other organs. For the liver and kidneys, there was a clear inverse link between host age and spirorchiid diversity, but there was no such association for different organs [1]. The first of its type molecular data in this work enables the first species-level examination of spirorchiid ova and associated disease, paves the way for the future development of targeted ante-mortem diagnosis of spirorchiidiasis, and provides the first such species-level examination. On the east coast of Queensland, Australia, hundreds of marine turtles are reported as stranded or dead each year. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature has categorised green sea turtles as being under Endangered status, and there were an average of 1152 strandings or mortalities per year from 2009 to 2014. One of the most frequently noted causes of stranding or death is disease, but it is unclear what causes infectious diseases to kill turtles [2]. The ability of parasites to spread disease is well known, with spirorchiid blood flukes and the coccidian Caryospora cheloniae being two examples. All major organs are affected by spirorchiid flukes, and both adults and ova might have negative consequences that may contribute to the Spirorchiidiasis is regarded as the most important infectious illness affecting sea turtles in Queensland [3].

Materials and Method

According to the early research conducted in the area, spirorchiids were detected in 40.9% to 72.2% of wild sea turtles and were linked to a variety of lesions as well as overall debilitation. According to histology, it was discovered in 1998 that spirorchiids were the main cause of death in 10% of the locally stranded green sea turtles and a serious issue in another 30%, with a 98% infection rate overall. Between 2006 and 2009, spirorchiids were also discovered to be the most typical killer of Queensland green sea turtles (41.8%). Two variables limit the ability to accurately estimate the distribution and relative importance of various Spirorchiid species [4]. First off, certain species' adults are miniscule and appear to prefer tiny blood arteries, making it incredibly challenging to find and collect them whole. Second, it is impossible to identify ova at the species level; they can only be divided into one of three broad morphological groups. Given the shortcomings of conventional gross and microscopy-based approaches in this area, molecular techniques may significantly advance our understanding of the parasite and the disease. Comparatively to traditional microscopic/histologic identification, molecular methods offer higher sensitivity and specificity [5].

They also have the added benefit of having the potential to be used for diagnostic purposes in live turtles. Thus, these methods can improve the ability to recognise and describe parasites, examining how they relate to pathology. Reports of pathology linked to eggs have so far been limited to general observations on related pathology and infrequently make an attempt to link lesions with specific species [6]. Spirorchiid ova require thorough examination of their effects and relationship with pathology since they are almost always present and frequently pre- delivered in the apparent absence of adult flukes. With the recent development and validation of a new molecular assay for the detection of spirorchiids and their eggs in green sea turtle tissues, previously unobtainable data can now be gathered [7]. This study uses a newly designed test to examine and quantify infection rates, tissue tropisms, and host variables in order to better understand spirorchiidiasis in turtle populations in Australia and other parts of the world. Between 2011 and 2015, green sea turtle carcasses were acquired from Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service e QPWS, as well as the wildlife rehabilitation centres Sea Life Underwater World (Mooloolaba) and Australia Zoo

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Wildlife Hospital (Beerwah). Turtles were either frozen or refrigerated for a maximum of two days prior to necropsy. The central Queensland region from Gladstone Port, neighboring islands south to the town of 1770, and the southern Queensland region between Hervey Bay and Ormiston were the two main areas where turtles were found. In northern Queensland's Townsville region, another turtle was retrieved [8].

Parasitological Methods

These regions include three of the several "hotspots" for marine turtle strandings on Australia's east coast, which gave researchers the chance to look into the disease's role in strandings To create an overall post-mortem health profile, turtles were divided into age groups based on the size criteria used, and body condition scores were judged visually and assigned using the criteria described. Between 2011 and the beginning of 2015, turtles were necropsied using protocols for sea turtle post mortem examination [9]. Adult flukes were collected during necropsy and identified using the described morphological and molecular techniques. Turtle tissue samples were gathered for molecular analysis. An entire cross section of tubiform organs, including the gastrointestinal tract and significant blood arteries, was taken. Depending on the presence of visible egg deposition, which is a sign of spirorchiid infection, samples from the stomach or small intestine were taken when sampling the gastrointestinal tract. Prior to examination using PCR and T-RFLP, samples were kept in 70% ethanol at 4 C [10].

This procedure involved a preliminary multiplex PCR to find and recognise spirorchiid genera based on the 28S gene, then a subsequent multiplex PCR. the creation of PCR products for species-level analysis via restriction nuclease digestion and capillary electrophoresis through a second round of singleplex reactions employing fluorescently tagged genus-specific primers [11]. There were a total of twelve genotypes examined. Even though some of these genotypes could not be linked to an existing morphological or molecular identification, they were nevertheless recognised as different species based on the degree of genetic diversity seen between types. With the help of universal eukaryote 18S primers, negative results from the first round of multiplex PCR were confirmed. Additional samples were taken and preserved in 10% neutral buffered formalin for histological analysis on unfrozen carcasses with little sign of decomposition in order to compare the health of the turtles with the impact of the parasites. Such examples were sectioned at a thickness of 5 mm, immersed in paraffin wax, and stained with hematoxylin and eosin (HE). A trained veterinary pathologist inspected the sections [12].

Histopathological Methods

Histology was used to evaluate the presence of spirorchiid eggs in tissues as well as any accompanying inflammatory lesions (e.g. granulomas). Granulomas were rated according to their relative severity, taking into account the size, quantity, and disruption of lesions as well as the surrounding cellular architecture. Scores of 2 and 4 were utilised where lesions did not clearly meet either side of the criterion or fluctuated in severity over the section. Grading was based on the approach given, but a five point scale was employed with a score of 1 designated for mild, 3 for moderate, and 5 for severe lesions [13].

Statistical Analyses

Based on PCR data and T-RFLP results, the percentage of organs infected with each spirorchiid genus was assessed. Calculations for species levels excluded samples with PCR findings but no species-level T-RFLP. Due to their genetic and physical closeness, as well as similar reported site tropisms, Hapalotrema, Learedius, and Amphiorchis were grouped together for the sake of this study, with genus level proportions being estimated as one. Using the Fisher's exact test with a 95% confidence interval, we examined the frequency of granulomas inside each organ type by age, sex, physical condition, and infection type, including single- and multi-species infections. We used a multivariable generalized linear model to examine the relationship between the existence of granulomas in brain samples (outcome) and a particular type of exposure to spirorchiid infection GLM [14].

Result

The simulation was altered. A logit link function was used to correct the model for the effects of age, sex (female e 0, male e 1), body condition, and Bernoulli distributed residuals (binomial family). Each sample was assigned to either a single infection defined as the presence of just one spirorchiid genotype, or multiple infections defined as the presence of two or more genotypes.

Discussion and Conclusion

A combined examination of the mature and big immature classes produced two age groups: 65 cm CCL small immature; assigned 0; and >65 cm mature and large immature; assigned -1. Those evaluated as being in excellent or fair physical condition made up the second category, while those regarded to be in poor or very poor physical health made up the first category. Analysis of spirorchiid incidence was inconclusive. Carried out at the species and genus levels. Odds ratios with 95% confidence intervals were used to express the effect size of each predictor variable. The average number of spirorchiids was compared to age, sex, and bodily condition in other organs using the Mann-Whitney Ue test. Version 13.1 of STATA was used for all analyses.

Acknowledgement

None

Conflict of Interest

None

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