

Graphidium strigosum

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This cosmopolitan parasite is mainly observed in the wild rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), and in palaeartic Leporidae, such as the hare (*Lepus europaeus*, *L. capensis*). The rabbit is probably the original host, as it tolerates the presence of *G. strigosum* much better than the hare, which presents important stomach lesions. It is thus speculated that the presence of this worm in hare populations depends on the presence of rabbits. The relationship of *Graphidium strigosum* and *Trichostrongylus retortaeformis* has been reported for wild rabbits. House rabbits become infested by green forage, contaminated by infective larvae.

Not much is known about the biology and the life cycle of this parasite.



The eggs are approximately 95*50 µm in size and are excreted in the morula stage. Under good environmental conditions, the larvae hatch about 10 h. later. The L₂ stage is reached in a further 2-3 days. Ensheathed L₃ larvae are infective and migrate along the herbage according to the period of the day: to the tip at dusk, downwards when exposed to sun light and heat, till they are ingested by their host. Male and female adult worms are red with many longitudinal lines and transversal striations. The males measure about 12 mm long, while females average 16 mm. The male possess paired and slender spicules and a well-developed copula-bursa.

Symptoms

Clinical signs are close to those of gastritis. Massive infestations can cause catarrhal gastritis with some fibrosis, and extreme inflammation of various parts of the intestinal tract (stomach, small intestine, cecum).

Necropsy shows that L₄ stage worms are coiled in the ducts of the gastric



glands of the fundus. Adults worms are generally located in the mucus layers, with the head buried in the stomach grooves, without attachment to the mucosa.

Treatment

Benzimidazoles	fenbendazole	20 mg/kg, PO, repeated after 10-14 days
Macrolides	ivermectin	0.4 mg/kg, SC, repeated after 10-14 days

Further information

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