<b>MOLECULAR INVESTIGATION OF <i>Ehrlichia canis<i> IN DOGS FROM VIÇOSA/MG, BRAZIL<b>

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The genus <i>Ehrlichia<i> encompass a group of obligate intracellular bacteria that infect phagocytes and are transmitted by ticks to dogs, equines, ruminants, felines and human. Canine monocytic ehrlichiosis, caused by <i>Ehrlichia canis<i>, is transmitted by the brown dog tick <i>Rhipicephalus sanguineus<i>. This work aimed to verify incidence of ehrlichiosis in dogs from Viçosa/MG with anemia and thrombocytopenia. For this 70 samples of blood were obtained of dogs that had arrived at the Veterinary Hospital of UFV for accomplishment of complete blood count. Of the 70 dogs, 34 had neither anemia nor thrombocytopenia, 19 had only anemia, 03 had only thrombocytopenia and 14 dogs had anemia and thrombocytopenia. These samples were tested for nested-PCR with genus-specific primers (ECB/ECC) and specie-specific primers for <i>E. canis<i> (ECAN5/HE3). Ehrlichiosis was diagnosed by nested-PCR in 3 (100%) dogs with only thrombocytopenia, 8 (57.1%) dogs with anemia and thrombocytopenia, 10 (29.4%) dogs that had neither anemia nor thrombocytopenia, and 5 (26.3%) dogs with only anemia. The products of nested-PCR of 4 samples had been sequenced and were closely related with <i>E. canis<i> sequences in stored GenBank. These results showed that <i>E. canis<i> is a common pathogen in dogs from Viçosa/MG and that ehrlichiosis have to be a differential diagnosis in dogs with only thrombocytopenia or anemia and thrombocytopenia. **mafra@ufv.br**

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