SHORT COMMUNICATION

BITE BY THE SPIDER HERPYLLUS ECCLESIASTICUS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

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RUSSELL and WALDRON (1967) listed 15 species of spiders which have been implicated in bites of humans in Southern California. HOREN (1963) listed 17 species which are reported or potentially dangerous spiders in the United States. RUSSELL (1973) stated that besides the *Loxosceles reclusa*, there are at least 50 other species of spiders in the United States which have been implicated in bites on human beings. The bite of the black widow and brown or violin spider accounts for most cases of arachnidism reported in this country. As spiders are ubiquitous, an attempt at spider identification should be made, if possible, after a reported spider bite.

We wish to report a spider bite inflicted by a species not noted in any previous report. A 55 year old caucasian female was bitten by *Herpyllus ecclesiasticus*, family Gnaphosidae, superfamily Argiopoidea. The bite occurred while the patient was in bed. The location of the bite was at the inferior angle of the left scapula. The patient experienced immediate sharp pain. A small punctate mark was observed at the site of the spider bite. The spider was captured and subsequently identified by a South Carolina State Board of Health entomologist. The patient complained of puritis, arthralgia, malaise, and nausea. These symptoms began 1 hr after the bite and increased in intensity for approximately 24 hr. The generalized symptoms subsided within 48 hr after the bite. No changes were noted in any laboratory data. The site of the spider bite had a 4 cm area of induration and erythema. The lesion was treated conservatively with an anti-inflammatory agent, steroid cream, and bed rest. The erythema subsided in 3 days but the induration persisted for 9 days. There was no residual tissue destruction at the site of the bite.

*Herpyllus ecclesiasticus* is widely distributed throughout the United States. The spider is typically found under rocks and rubbish, between boards and in crevices in dark places. This spider is related to *Loxosceles*, being in the same superfamily Argiopoidea. This spider, though widely distributed, has not previously been implicated in bites on humans.

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REFERENCES


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