Editorial

Brucellosis

This supplement of The Open Veterinary Science Journal is devoted to brucellosis, which is one of the most important zoonotic diseases in the world. Brucellosis has been recognized since 1887, when Dr. David Bruce discovered that Malta Fever was caused by a bacteria, initially named *Micrococcus melitensis* (subsequently *Brucella melitensis* in honor of Dr. Bruce). Soon after the demonstration of the etiology of Malta Fever, Dr. Themistocles Zammit gave a major contribution demonstrating that goats were the reservoir for human infections. Interestingly, there are evidences that brucellosis has been established as a human disease long before, as indicated by skeletal lesions compatible with *Brucella*-induced lesions in people that died during the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in the year 79 AD (Capasso, J Infect 2002; 45: 122-7). Furthermore, scientists have even speculated on the diagnosis of vertebral brucellosis in the partial skeleton of the late Pliocene *Australopithecus africanus*, suggesting that this infectious disease occasionally affected our direct ancestors 2.3-2.5 million years ago (D'Anastasio *et al*., Epidemiol Infect 2010; 7: 1-8). In addition to these ancient lines of evidences to support a long standing relation between *Brucella* spp. and their hosts, the genus *Brucella* has recently experienced a marked expansion, with the recognition of strains that have marine mammals as their preferential hosts, as well as newly recognized species isolated from humans, rodents and non-human primates. Therefore, this supplement of The Open Veterinary Science Journal, which includes several up to date reviews, represents a contribution for those who deal with brucellosis either in scientific or professional grounds. This issue addresses several relevant aspects of *Brucella* spp. and brucellosis, including pathogenesis, taxonomy, clinical manifestations, diagnosis, natural resistance, immunity and vaccine development, and epidemiology and risk factors.

Renato de Lima Santos
(***Guest Editor***)
Pró-Reitor de Pesquisa
Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais
Av. Antonio Carlos, 6627
Reitoria - 7º Andar
31270-901 Belo Horizonte, MG
Brazil
E-mail: rsantos@vet.ufmg.br

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