Lösch LS et al., J Microb Biochem Technol 2016, 8:2(Suppl)
http://dx.doi.org/10.4172/1948-5948.C1.017

Presence of *Legionella pneumophila* in household drinking water reservoirs in Resistencia, Chaco, Argentina

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Introduction: *Legionella* genus includes species that are found in a variety of aquatic environments. They are able to survive in a wide range of physicochemical conditions and colonize distribution systems and storage of drinking water. *L. pneumophila* is the primary pathogen transmitted by water that produces 90% of cases of Legionnaires' disease.

There is little information of the incidence of Legionnaires' disease in Latin America. In Argentina the incidence of pnuemonias as a consequence of *Legionella* infection is approximately 2%. Nonetheless there is no information of the occurrence of *Legionella* in engineered systems in the country.

Objetive: The aim of this study was detect the presence of *Legionella pneumophila* in household drinking water tanks of the city of Resistencia, Chaco.

Methods: The sampling was non-probabilistic for convenience. Thirty two water samples taken from different points in the city were studied. *Legionella* detection in the samples was performed by culture as set out in the ISO standard 11731:1998. Real-time polymerase chain reaction (qPCR) assay was applied to isolates obtained by culture and identified as *Legionella* spp according to the ISO standards. The target sequences used corresponded to 23S rRNA gene, for the confirmation of the genus, and *mip* gene specific for the species *L. pneumophila*.

Results: In 12 (37.5%) of the 32 samples studied, *Legionella* spp was recovered. The presence of *L. pneumophila* was confirmed by qPCR in all positive samples. In addition, 3 of these samples (9.5%) were also positive for another species of the genus *Legionella*. The number of samples studies represents 0.03% of households connected to the public water distribution system of Resistencia city.

Conclusion: This study demonstrated the presence of *L. pneumophila* and other *Legionella* species in residential drinking water reservoirs of Resistencia city. Also it represents the first report of the surveillance of this organism in engineered water systems of Argentina.

Acknowledgements: "Investigación financiada por el Programa de Becas Carrillo-Oñativia, Comisión Nacional Salud Investiga, Ministerio de Salud de la Nación" y por la Secretaría General de Ciencia y Técnica de la Universidad Nacional del Nordeste. PI17/12L003

Biography

Liliana S. Lösch is biochemistry of Instituto de Medicina Regional de la Universidad Nacional del Nordeste in Chaco, Argentina. She has completed her MSC in Tropical Medicine. Her main interests are waterborne pathogens in particular Legionella and diarrheagenic *Escherichia coli* and to apply molecular approaches to assess water quality and pathogenic risks.

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