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A serological survey of *Brucella* spp. in red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) in Portugal

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Wildlife have been identified as important sentinels for the surveillance of zoonotic pathogens such as *Brucella* infection. Systematic brucellosis monitoring in wildlife is not demanded by regulatory acts, but several studies have reported the presence of this infection in European countries. In order to investigate the importance of red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) in the epidemiology of *Brucella* infection in Portugal, a serological survey was performed on samples from 276 hunted red deer from the centre of Portugal. Specific antibodies to *Brucella* spp. were detected with a commercial enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) (IDVet[®], Montpellier, France). *Brucella*-specific antibodies were detected in sera from 18 of 276 (6.5%; 95% CI: 4.2-10.1%) red deer. The seroprevalence of *Brucella* spp. in Portuguese red deer seems to be relatively low, but the red deer population has still to be considered as potential reservoir for *Brucella* spp. transmission to domestic ruminants.

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