

## **Prevalence of *Leptospira* Spp. Serovar Bratislava in Pigs from, kaduna State, nigeria using competitive -Elisa.**

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**Abstract:** The scarcity of information on porcine leptospirosis in Zaria and areas of Kaduna State led to this study, in order to detect antibodies to *Leptospira* in pigs, and to isolate *Leptospira* from pigs in Kaduna state Nigeria. The methodologies involved serological survey using competitive Enzyme Linked Immuno-Sorbent Assay (cELISA). Five hundred (500) porcine blood (whole blood) samples were collected for serology. The percentage distribution of antibodies to *Leptospira* detected using C - ELISA was 75 (15.83). This study showed that antibodies to *Leptospira* are present in pigs in Kaduna state, Nigeria. Based on the findings of this study, recommendations are; proper hygienic handling of pigs and porcine raw materials in farms, households, markets, teaching hospitals and abattoirs, by personnel like veterinarians, farmers, butchers, sewer workers, pork meat consumers that are at high risk of contracting leptospirosis. There is need for public health awareness and education on prevention /control of leptospirosis, as the disease is of great public health significance.

**Keywords:** Prevalence, *Leptospira* spp. serovar Bratislava, Pigs, C-ELISA, Kaduna, Nigeria.

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Date of Submission: 03-02-2018

Date of acceptance: 20-01-2018

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### **I. Introduction**

Leptospirosis is also known as Weil's disease, Weil's syndrome, canicola fever, cane field fever, nanukayami fever, 7-day fever, rat catcher's yellows, Fort bragg fever, and pretibial fever (James et al., 2006). These bacteria are long, motile spirochaetes that can be either free living in the environment or found as parasites in animal hosts (Ricardo et al., 2008; Gompf, 2006). The incubation period is usually 5–14 days, with a range of 2–30 days (Terpstra et al., 2003a). It has been reported in over 150 mammalian species such as cattle, goat, sheep, pigs, man, dog, bats, marsupials, cat, rat, mice, and buffalo (Christopher et al., 2011; Ngbede et al., 2012). Both saprophytic and pathogenic species presently exist in nature, but saprophytic species, such as *Leptospira biflexa*, live in water and soil and do not infect animals (Skyles, 2011). Advantage of bacteriologic culture is the possibility of isolating *Leptospira* species of any serovar. However, bacteriologic culture procedures are too expensive and too slow for routine use, because fresh samples are necessary and 4 to 6 months may be required for conclusive results (Bolin et al., 1989b; Sarah et al., 2015), thereby necessitating the use of rapid screening test like ELISA (Bhatia et al., 2015). ELISA has been shown to be a highly sensitive and suitable diagnostic test for routine screening of leptospirosis due to its high specificity and sensitivity (Thiermann and Garrett, 1983; Yan et al., 1999; OIE, 2008; Ngbede et al., 2012). In addition, the organisms are needed for typing, as specific antigens in serological tests and for determination of pathogenicity/ vaccine production (Thiermann, 1984; Banihashemi, 2013). Leptospirosis occurs worldwide (Hua – wei et al., 2015), wherever there is a risk of direct or indirect contact with the urine of infected animals (Colleen et al., 2015). Theoretically, any mammal is capable of being infected by any serovar of *Leptospira interrogans* (Christopher et al., 2011). However, optimal conditions for survival are a warm and wet environment, with neutral or slightly alkaline water (Colleen et al., 2015; Senaka et al., 2015).

### **II. Materials And Methods**

#### **Experimental Area, Animals And Sampling**

The study was carried out in parts of Kaduna State (Zaria, Kaduna metropolis and Kafanchan), Nigeria. Zaria is located between latitude 11°04' N and longitude 7°42' E, covering an area of 300km<sup>2</sup> and with a population of about 408,198. The vegetation is Northern Guinea Savannah zone, with rainfall ranging from 0.0 to 816.0 mm/month and temperature of 17°C to 33°C (Mortimore, 1970). Kafanchan is a town in Southern Kaduna located between latitude 9°34'N and longitude 8°18'E, with an estimated population of 83,092 (Archibong, 2006). Kaduna metropolis is located between latitude 10°31'N and longitude 7°26'E, covering an area of 46.053 km<sup>2</sup> and with a population of about 6,066,562 (Fletcher *et al.*, 1996). The sampling was carried

out from June to August, 2012 following the methods of Levett, (2001). Sampling covered areas of Zaria, Kaduna metropolis and Kafanchan, which are major areas for convergence of pigs in Kaduna state. Demographic data such as age, sex, breed, management practice, source and location of the animals were recorded.

### Serological Analysis

Serology was done using, the Linnodee Porcine *Leptospira bratislava* cELISA (Solid Kit), which was obtained from Linnodee Animal Care Laboratory in Ireland. The solid kit is a competitive ELISA based on a unique monoclonal antibody to *L. bratislava* specific antigen with high specificity, and high sensitivity. The kit is safe and easy to use, suitable for screening large numbers of sera, and with an assay time of 180 minutes. It detects IgM antibodies in porcine serum (Linnodee, 2010).

**Coating of Antigen:** Addition of 100µl / well of *L. Bratislava* antigen diluted 1/100 in coating buffer was done. Then the plates were Sealed and incubated for 30 minutes at 37°C with shaking. This was washed x3.

**Blocking of the Plate:** Addition of 100µl / well of blocking buffer (x1) was carried out, then the plates were sealed and incubated for 30 minutes at 37°C with shaking. After which the plates were washed x3. For each washing step, the test wells were washed with at least 200µl/well of diluted wash buffer. Following the final wash, removal of residual wash buffer was done by inverting the plate and blotting firmly on absorbent paper.

**Sample incubation:** Addition of 100µl / well of test and control samples were carried out. Plates were then sealed and incubated for 45 minutes at 37°C with shaking. Then, wash x4. Four wells contained sample diluent only as this was used as the control OD.

**Incubation with Monoclonal Antibody:** Addition of 100µl / well of the anti-*L.Bratislava* monoclonal antibody diluted 1/800 in blocking buffer. Plates sealed and incubated for 30 minutes at 37°C with shaking. The plates were washed x3.

**Conjugate incubation:** Addition of 100µl / well of peroxidase conjugate diluted 1/7000 in blocking buffer was carried out. Plates were sealed and incubated for 30 minutes at 37°C with shaking. Were wash x3.

**Substrate incubation:** 100µl / well of TMB-E substrate was added. Plates were then incubated in the dark at room temperature for 10mins. 50µl / well of stop reagent was added. The plates were read at 450nm.

The monoclonal antibodies compete with anti-LPS antibodies in serum. The specific porcine antibodies if present bind to the *L. bratislava* antigen and inhibit binding of the monoclonal antibody.

The positivity of a sample was determined using the following calculation:

$$\% \text{ Inhibition} = \frac{[(\text{Control OD} - \text{Test Serum OD}) / \text{Control OD}] \times 100}{}$$

Results were interpreted as follows:

1. The result is considered positive if % Inhibition > 40%
2. The result is considered negative if % Inhibition ≤ 40%

### Statistical Analysis

Results were subjected to simple descriptive statistical methods e.g. bar chart and tables. The data obtained were analyzed using Chi-square analysis and statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 (SPSS, Chicago, IL, USA). Values of P < 0.05 were considered significant.

## III. Results

### Prevalence of *Leptospira* antibodies from serum samples of pigs

Percentage inhibition of greater than 40% which was considered as positive had a frequency of 75 (15.83%) and percentage inhibition less than or equal to 40% considered to be negative was 405 (84.37%). A calculated percentage occurrence of 15.83% was obtained. (Table 1)

**Table 1:** Percentage distribution of IgM antibodies to *Leptospira* detected by c-ELISA

| Serum sample tested | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Positive            | 75        | 15.83          |
| Negative            | 405       | 84.17          |
| Total               | 480       | 100            |

**Table 2:** Distribution of *Leptospira* antibodies according to age in Kaduna State, as determined by cELISA.

| Age group      | Result of cELISA |              | Total (%) |
|----------------|------------------|--------------|-----------|
|                | Positive (%)     | Negative (%) |           |
| 0 – 5 months   | 19 (23.2)        | 63 (76.8)    | 82 (100)  |
| 6 – 10 months  | 17 (13.5)        | 109 (86.5)   | 126 (100) |
| 11- 15 months  | 30 (15.2)        | 168 (84.8)   | 198 (100) |
| 16 – 20 months | 8 (14.0)         | 49 (86.0)    | 57 (100)  |
| 21 – 25 months | 0 (0.0)          | 12 (100)     | 12 (100)  |
| 26+ months     | 1 (20)           | 4 (80)       | 5 (100)   |
| Total          | 75 (15.83)       | 405 (84.4)   | 480 (100) |

(Chi square = 6.414; p=0.268; p>0.005)

**Table 3 :** Distribution of antibodies to *Leptospira* according to sex in Kaduna State, as determined by cELISA.

| Sex    | Result of cELISA |              | Total (%) |
|--------|------------------|--------------|-----------|
|        | Positive (%)     | Negative (%) |           |
| Male   | 51 (17.2)        | 245 (82.8)   | 296 (100) |
| Female | 24 (13.0)        | 160 (87.0)   | 184 (100) |
| Total  | 75 (15.83)       | 405 (84.4)   | 480 (100) |

(Chi square = 1.508; p=0.219; p>0.005)

**Table 3:** Distribution of *Leptospira* antibodies according to age in Kaduna State, as determined by cELISA.

| Age group      | Result of cELISA |              | Total (%) |
|----------------|------------------|--------------|-----------|
|                | Positive (%)     | Negative (%) |           |
| 0 – 5 months   | 19 (23.2)        | 63 (76.8)    | 82 (100)  |
| 6 – 10 months  | 17 (13.5)        | 109 (86.5)   | 126 (100) |
| 11- 15 months  | 30 (15.2)        | 168 (84.8)   | 198 (100) |
| 16 – 20 months | 8 (14.0)         | 49 (86.0)    | 57 (100)  |
| 21 – 25 months | 0 (0.0)          | 12 (100)     | 12 (100)  |
| 26+ months     | 1 (20)           | 4 (80)       | 5 (100)   |
| Total          | 75 (15.83)       | 405 (84.4)   | 480 (100) |

(Chi square = 6.414; p=0.268; p>0.005)

**Table 4.4:** Distribution of *Leptospira* antibodies according to location in Kaduna State, as determined by cELISA.

| Location  | Result of cELISA |              | Total (%) |
|-----------|------------------|--------------|-----------|
|           | Positive (%)     | Negative (%) |           |
| Kafanchan | 29 (14.5)        | 171 (85.5)   | 200 (100) |
| Kaduna    | 8 (16.0)         | 42 (84.0)    | 50 (100)  |
| Zaria     | 38 (16.5)        | 192 (83.5)   | 230 (100) |
| Total     | 75 (15.83)       | 405 (84.4)   | 480 (100) |

(Chi square = 0.338; p=0.845; p>0.005)

**Table 4.5:** Distribution of positive animals according to breed in Kaduna State, as determined by cELISA

| Breed  | Result of cELISA |              | Total (%) |
|--------|------------------|--------------|-----------|
|        | Positive (%)     | Negative (%) |           |
| Local  | 68 (16.4)        | 346 (83.6)   | 414 (100) |
| Exotic | 7 (10.6)         | 59 (89.4)    | 66 (100)  |
| Total  | 75 (15.83)       | 405 (84.4)   | 480 (100) |

(Chi square = 1.462; p=0.227; p>0.005)

**Table 4.6:** distribution of positive samples based on source of animal

| Source of animal | Result of cELISA |              | Total (%) |
|------------------|------------------|--------------|-----------|
|                  | Positive (%)     | Negative (%) |           |
| Household        | 40 (15.2)        | 224 (84.8)   | 264 (100) |
| Farms            | 23 (29.9)        | 54 (70.1)    | 77 (100)  |
| Abattoir         | 6 (16.2)         | 31 (83.8)    | 37 (100)  |
| Market           | 6 (5.9)          | 96 (94.1)    | 102 (100) |
| Total            | 75 (15.83)       | 405 (84.4)   | 480 (100) |

(Chi square = 19.250; p=0.000; p<0.005)

**Table 4.7:** Distribution of positive samples based on management practice, as determined by cELISA.

| Management practice | Result of cELISA |              | Total (%) |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------|-----------|
|                     | Positive (%)     | Negative (%) |           |
| Intensive           | 6 (7.7)          | 72 (92.3)    | 78 (100)  |
| Semi – intensive    | 46 (26.9)        | 125 (73.1)   | 171 (100) |
| Extensive           | 21(9.4)          | 202 (90.6)   | 223 (100) |
| Unknown             | 2 (25.0)         | 6 (75.0)     | 8 (100)   |
| Total               | 75 (15.83)       | 405 (84.4)   | 480 (100) |

(Chi square = 27.266; p=0.000; p<0.005)

#### IV. Discussion

Immunoglobulin M (IgM) antibodies to *Leptospira* was detected using IgM competitive ELISA in 75 sera (15.83%), out of the 480 samples tested (Table 4.1). A percentage occurrence of 15.83% was obtained in this study, which is higher than the earliest study reports on seroprevalence of leptospirosis in Nigeria, which indicated a positive rate of 4.5% in rats (Diallo and Dennis, 1982), and 8.44% in cattle (Ngbede et al., 2012) in Zaria, Kaduna – State. The high percentage occurrence in this present study was attributed to the fact that the previous studies used sandwich ELISA while in this present studies a competitive ELISA kits were used and also, the previous study was targeted towards detecting IgG antibodies to *Leptospira* which indicates latent infection (Ngbede et al., 2013), while this study was targeted towards detecting IgM antibodies to *Leptospira* which indicates acute infection. In the previous work their results were obtained from rats and cattle while the present studies were from pigs. The high percentage occurrence in this study may also be as a result of the unhygienic state/poor management practice observed in pig housing / mud flooring, which increases the risk of infection (Terpstra et al., 2003b). The IgM cELISA kits used in this study, is highly specific for *Leptospira interrogans* serovar Bratislava and the value (15.83%) obtained, is higher than the prevalence of 13.7%, reported for *L. interrogans* serovar Bratislava detected in dogs by Agunloye et al. (2002), in Ibadan, Nigeria. This may be as a result of pigs unlike dogs, wallow in dirty/mud water due to possession of poor sweat glands, hence the need for body temperature regulation, and at such are at greater risk of contracting the disease than dogs, because pigs are usually raised on mud floor houses with poor sanitary conditions (Terpstra et al., 2003b; Bharadwaj et al., 2002)), and infected animals become carriers for live (Thiermann, 1981; Leonard et al., 1992; Faine et al., 1999b; Bharti et al., 2003), they also continue to shed the organisms in urine and genital fluid onto the mud floors (Terpstra, 2006, and leptospires have been reported to persist long in contaminated soil/water for long, hence increasing the risk of infection more on pigs (Kuperk et al., 2000) . The percentage occurrence obtained from this study agrees with the work of Bertherat et al. (1999) who reported a prevalence of 15% in cattle in Gabon, Africa. And lower than the 16% positive rate reported in aborting goats in Ibadan by Agunloye et al. (1997), and 16.7% reported in vaccinated dogs in Ibadan by agunloye et al. (2002), this was attributed to the presence of previous antibodies raised due to previous vaccination (Ngbede et al., 2013), as a result of routine DHLPP vaccination in dogs with live *Leptospira* polyvalent vaccines and hence, maybe the reason for the increase in circulating antibodies in serum due to previous exposure. The absence of a statistically significant association ( $p=0.219$ ;  $p>0.05$ ) (Table 4.2) using IgM cELISA between the presence of *Leptospira* antibodies in sera and sex indicates that both males and females possess equal risk of contracting the infection. Males had a higher percentage occurrence (17.2%), than was observed in females (13.0%) and this might be as a result of sample size collected in this study because more males were sampled than females (Table 4.2). The absence of a statistically significant association ( $p=0.268$ ;  $p>0.05$ ) (Table 4.3) using IgM cELISA between the presence of *Leptospira* antibodies in sera and age indicates that all age groups possess equal risk of contracting the infection. The highest no of positives was seen among the age group 11 – 15 months (30), this may be due to the fact that, at this age the pigs are said to have reach table size and at such taken to the market or slaughtered, and others at this age are released to roam about and fend for themselves (semi-intensive management). There was no statistically significant association between location ( $p=0.845$ ;  $p>0.05$ ) (Table 4.4), breed ( $p=0.227$ ;  $p>0.05$ ) (Table 4.5) and seropositivity of pigs, which indicates that all location sampled, as well as both local and exotic breeds all have equal risk of contracting *Leptospira interrogans* serovar Bratislava, as observed by our findings. Which is in agreement with the report of Ngede et al. (2013) and Adama et al. (2011), that indigenous breed (Local breeds) are more common in this area, which was the case in our study with the indigenous breed being more predominant at the time of sampling, with a higher prevalence ( $n=430$ ), than the exotic breed ( $n=70$ ). The presence of a statistically significant association between source of animal ( $p=0.000$ ;  $p<0.005$ ) (Table 4.6), management Practice ( $p=0.000$ ;  $p<0.005$ ) (Table 4.7) and seropositivity of pigs. which indicates that management practice and the source of animal plays a role in predisposing the animals to infection with the disease, as well as increases the risk of transmitting the disease from one animal to another through constant shedding of the organism in urine, especially in places like markets were unsuspecting farmers and pig owners come to purchase more pigs to increase their stock, as seen in our research where pigs were apparently healthy

yet some were seropositive. Which agrees with the report of Bharti et al. (2003), which says when animals become infected, they might not show clinical signs to the disease but yet remain carriers for life.

Porcine leptospirosis is endemic in pigs in Kaduna state, Nigeria with a percentage occurrence of 15.83% and this study has shown the presence of *Leptospira* antibodies among pigs in Kaduna state.

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Adah BMJ "Prevalence of *Leptospira* Spp. Serovar Bratislava in Pigs from, kaduna State, nigeria using competitive -Elisa." *IOSR Journal of Agriculture and Veterinary Science (IOSR-JAVS)* 11.2 (2018): 11-16.