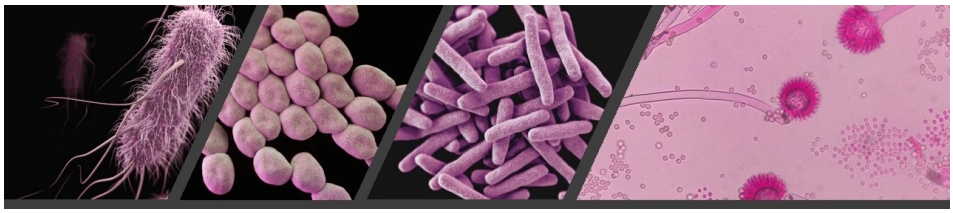

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Pseudorabies virus-associated encephalitis in hunting dogs in Greece: The role of wild boars as a persistent reservoir in Greece

Thursday 11 September 2025 16:45 (15 minutes)

Introduction: Pseudorabies, caused by Suid herpesvirus 1 (SuHV-1), primarily affects swine and accidentally other mammals. Although eradicated from domestic pigs in many European countries, SuHV-1 persists in wild boar populations. Hunting dogs are at particular risk due to direct exposure during wild boar hunts.
Methods: Between 2022–2024, seven cases of neurological disease and death in hunting dogs were investigated in the regions of Epirus and Thessaly, Greece. Postmortem brain tissues were tested by PCR targeting a part of the glycoprotein D gene of SuHV-1. Positive samples were subjected to sequencing and phylogenetic analysis.
Results: All seven cases tested PCR-positive for SuHV-1. Phylogenetic analysis of the gD gene sequences revealed genetic divergence among the isolates. The Epirus strains formed a separate clade, suggesting localized viral evolution. The Thessaly isolate showed greater divergence, clustering independently and indicating a potentially unique lineage within the Greek wild boar reservoir.
Conclusion: Our findings confirm the ongoing circulation of SuHV-1 strains in wild boar populations in Greece and demonstrate the fatal risk posed to hunting dogs. These data highlight the need to raise awareness among veterinary practitioners to include pseudorabies in the differential diagnosis of encephalitis in dogs.

Keywords

wild boar; pseudorabies; dog; encephalitis

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Professor

Authors: PAPAGEORGIOU, Konstantinos (School of Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece); Dr BOUZALAS, Ilias (Veterinary Research Institute, Hellenic Agricultural Organization DIMITRA (ELGO-DIMITRA)); Mrs GIAMOUSTARI, Kiriaki (Laboratory of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, School of Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki); Mrs WRÓBEL, Małgorzata (Department of Microbiology and Clinical Immunology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn); Prof. DOUKAS, Dimitrios (Laboratory of Animal Pathology and Veterinary Forensics, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Thessaly); Mrs STOIKOU, Aikaterini (Laboratory of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, School of Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, Aristotle

University of Thessaloniki); Prof. ATHANASAKOPOULOU, Zoi (Laboratory of Microbiology and Parasitology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Thessaly); Prof. CHATZOPOULOS, DImitrios (Laboratory of One Health, Infectious Diseases and Zoonoses, Department of Public and One Health, Uni-versity of Thessaly); Dr PAPADOPOULOS, Dimitrios (Laboratory of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, School of Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki); Mr PAKOS, Spyridon (Veterinarian, Ioannina, Greece); Mrs KARAPETSIOU, Chrysanthi (Veterinary Directorate, Region of Epiros, 45332 Ioannina,); Prof. BILLINIS, Charalambos (Laboratory of Microbiology and Parasitology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Thessaly, 43100 Karditsa); Prof. PETRIDOU, Evanthia (Laboratory of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, School of Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 54124 Thessaloniki); Prof. KRITAS, Spyridon (Laboratory of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, School of Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 54124 Thessaloniki)

Presenter: PAPAGEORGIOU, Konstantinos (School of Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece)

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