

**Title: Molecular Prevalence of Canine Hepatozoonosis in Owned-Dogs in Central Part of Turkey**

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**Abstract**

Canine hepatozoonosis is a tick-borne disease caused by *Hepatozoon canis* and *Hepatozoon americanum*. *H. canis* is widespread almost all over the world, while *H. americanum* exists only in the continental of America. The aim of this study was to determine the prevalence of canine hepatozoonosis from blood samples of 150 owned-dogs in central part of Turkey using polymerase chain reaction (PCR). Sixty seven out of 150 (44.67%) samples were PCR positive for *Hepatozoon* spp. Five out of 67 positive PCR products were sequenced to determine *Hepatozoon* species. Partial nucleotide sequences of 18S small subunit ribosomal RNA gene were compared to *Hepatozoon* spp. sequences registered in GenBank. Nucleotide sequencing resulted in three samples of the *Hepatozoon* spp.; two samples were determined to be *H. canis*. Five nucleotide sequences detected in this study were deposited in GenBank under accession numbers MW350127, MW350128 (*Hepatozoon canis*), MW350129- MW350131 (*Hepatozoon* spp.). In this study, canine hepatozoonosis infection rate was found to be very high (44.67%), resulting in a high rate of infection among the owned-dog populations in the study areas. To the best of our knowledge, it is the first study on the etiology and epidemiology canine hepatozoonosis in Sivas province in Turkey.

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