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Ian Maudlin, Mark Charles Eisler, and Susan Christina Welburn

Neglected and endemic zoonoses

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[Abstract](#) [Full Text](#) [Full Text \(PDF\)](#)**Taenia asiatica: the most neglected human taeniasis****M. Teresa Galan-Puchades, Professor Marius V. Fuentes**

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Maudlin et al (2009) recently reviewed the most relevant neglected and endemic zoonoses. Among them, human taeniasis, and specifically cysticercosis, is included. Concerning its control, the Task Force for Disease Eradication (TFDE) declared taeniasis/cysticercosis "potentially eradicable" in 1993 (Schantz et al. 1993). However, since the recommendations of the TFDE 16 years ago until now, the scenario of human taeniasis/cysticercosis has changed dramatically as a new species of *Taenia*, *T. asiatica*, has also been found to infect humans in addition to *T. solium* and *T. saginata*. *T. asiatica* is generally neglected in the global elimination context of human taeniasis/cysticercosis. We reckon that *T. asiatica* remains ignored mainly for two reasons: its supposed geographical distribution restricted to Asian countries and its close molecular similarity to *T. saginata* which suggests that *T. asiatica* probably does not cause human cysticercosis. Apparently, there are no reasons why globalization should not have affected *T. asiatica*, a zoonotic parasite with the same hosts as the cosmopolitan *T. solium*, i.e. humans and pigs. Concerning cysticercosis, so long as no 100% specific immunodiagnostic technique for *T. solium* cysticercosis is available, it is hazardous to discard *T. asiatica* as a cause of human cysticercosis (Galan-Puchades & Fuentes 2004, 2009). When Maudlin et al (2009) consider the prospects for control of cysticercosis, they state that "given the relatively uncomplicated epidemiology of *T. solium*, elimination or even eradication might seem a reasonable and even feasible goal". Concerning the epidemiology of *T. solium*, Conlan et al (2009) recently suggested that *T. asiatica* could have an effect on *T. solium* transmission dynamics due to interspecific competition since both species share the same hosts. Therefore, the global human taeniasis/cysticercosis scenario is that we currently do not know the definitive geographical distribution, the global burden and the pathogenicity of one of the three human *Taenia* species, turning *T. asiatica* into the most neglected human taeniasis. These knowledge gaps should first be assessed before strategies of global taeniasis/cysticercosis elimination are implemented, since *T. asiatica* is not only a potential candidate to produce human cysticercosis but, as well, a modulating factor in the epidemiology of *T. solium*.

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Conflict of Interest:

None declared

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