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Contents

Free Paper Oral Presentations 13

76: Horses for courses: targeted or universal MRSA screening in high endemic situations?.....13

111: Effects of piperacillin-tazobactam exposure on intestinal colonisation with *Klebsiella pneumoniae* OXA-48 in an in-vitro gut model.....14

215: Multisite Bacillus outbreak related to laundry management15

46: Are we missing oral MRSA? A comparison of two screening methods.16

69: Transmission of *Clostridium difficile* spores within an American healthcare facility.....17

120: Blue light (400nm) – a novel decontamination strategy for carbapenemase-producing *Enterobacteriaceae*?18

59: Biofilm and the genesis of cancer on implantable medical devices19

64: Reducing catheter associated urinary tract infections in hospitals: a multi-site randomised controlled study.....20

135: Outcome of hospitalised patients with catheter-associated complicated urinary tract infection. Results of the COMBACTE-MAGNET, RESCUING study.....21

115: Assessment of screening methods used for the detection of the carbapenemase producing *Enterobacteriaceae* (CPE) *Klebsiella pneumoniae* OXA-4822

57: Improving hand hygiene compliance among anaesthetic staff using the WHO concept “patient’s contaminated zone”23

53: Epidemiology and interventions in 23 carbapenem-resistant organism outbreaks involving hospital wastewater drains.....24

146: Evaluation of droplet production by a new design of clinical hand wash basin for the healthcare environment.....25

148: Use of a model hospital sink system to investigate proliferation, aerosolisation and dispersal of carbapenemase-producing *Enterobacteriaceae* from hospital waste traps.....26

191: Human-related microsporidia in the English urban environment: what we know so far?

Hoosen H¹, Anjum U¹, Izquierdo F², Peña-Fernández A¹
¹De Montfort University, ²Universidad San Pablo CEU

Poster Talk 2 (Mon 26 Nov 17:15 - 18:15), Exhibition Hall, November 26, 2018, 5:15 PM - 6:15 PM

The potential zoonotic transmission route of *Enterocytozoon bieneusi* and *Encephalitozoon* spp. (*E. intestinalis*, *E. hellem* and *E. cuniculi*) is under discussion. "Urban animals" could represent a risk to the population that should be carefully studied. Following the detection of human-related microsporidia in 2/18 dog faecal samples collected in the city centre of Leicester (UK) in January 2016, 228 animal faecal samples were randomly sampled from different parks and recreational areas across Leicester from June 2016 to February 2017. The presence of microsporidia species were sought by real time polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) with melting curve analysis after extracting DNA using bead disruption of the spores using Fast-Prep for soil[®] following previous methodologies. 28 stool samples were positive for human-pathogenic microsporidia, as follows: *Enterocytozoon bieneusi* was detected in 2 waterfowl stool samples. A higher prevalence of *Encephalitozoon* spp. was identified. Thus, 26 faecal samples (14 deer, 7 avian [3 waterfowl, 2 songbird, 1 pigeon, 1 uncertain], 2 dog, 1 fox and 2 unidentified due to diarrhoea) were positive for *Encephalitozoon* spp. Specifically, *E. intestinalis*/ *E. hellem* were detected in two samples from avian species (waterfowl and diarrhoeic sample) and *E. cuniculi* in 7 (6 deer ; 1 fox). Our results indicate the presence of human-related microsporidia in urban parks and recreational areas in Leicester, which could represent a risk for humans. Interventions to tackle this potential risk should be applicable to a variety of animals, although more studies are needed to fully understand the potential zoonotic role of these pathogens.