

Rickettsioses in Latin America, Caribbean, Spain and Portugal

Rickettsiosis en América Latina, el Caribe, España y Portugal

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Recibido: Enero de 2011; Aceptado: Agosto de 2011.

ABSTRACT

Data on genus and infectious by *Rickettsia* were retrospectively compiled from the critical review literature regarding all countries in Latin America, Caribbean islands, Portugal and Spain. We considered all *Rickettsia* records reported for human and/or animal hosts, and/or invertebrate hosts considered being the vector. In a few cases, when no direct detection of a given *Rickettsia* group or species was available for a given country, the serologic method was considered. A total of 13 *Rickettsia* species have been recorded in Latin America and the Caribbean. The species with the largest number of country confirmed records were *Rickettsia felis* (9 countries), *R. prowazekii* (7 countries), *R. typhi* (6 countries), *R. rickettsii* (6 countries), *R. amblyommii* (5 countries), and *R. parkeri* (4 countries). The rickettsial records for the Caribbean islands (West Indies) were grouped in only one geographical area. Both *R. bellii*, *R. akari*, and Candidatus '*R. andeane*' have been recorded in only 2 countries each, whereas *R. massiliae*, *R. rhipicephali*, *R. monteiroi*, and *R. africae* have each been recorded in a single country (in this case, *R. africae* has been recorded in nine Caribbean Islands). For El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, no specific *Rickettsia* has been reported so far, but there have been serological evidence of human or/and animal infection. The following countries remain without any rickettsial records: Belize, Venezuela, Guyana, Surinam, and Paraguay. In addition, except for a few islands, many Caribbean islands remain without records. A total of 12 *Rickettsia* species have been reported in Spain and Portugal: *R. conorii*, *R. helvetica*, *R. monacensis*, *R. felis*, *R. slovacica*, *R. raoultii*, *R. sibirica*, *R. aeschlimannii*, *R. rioja*, *R. massiliae*, *R. typhi*, and *R. prowazekii*. Amongst these *Rickettsia* species reported in Spain and Portugal, only *R. prowazekii*, *R. typhi*, *R. felis*, and *R. massiliae* have also been reported in Latin America. This study summarizes the current state of art on the rickettsial distribution in Latin America, Caribbean, Spain and Portugal. The data obtained allow a better understanding on rickettsial epidemiology and distribution of vector ecology.

Key words: Acari, epidemiology, rocky mountain spotted fever, vector control. (Source: DeCS).

RESUMEN

Reportes del género *Rickettsia* y sus asociadas infecciones fueron compilados en una revisión crítica retrospectiva de la literatura científica de los países de Latinoamérica, el Caribe, Portugal y España. Se consideraron todos los reportes para huéspedes humanos y/o animales y también para huéspedes invertebrados los cuales fueron considerados como vectores asociados con *Rickettsia*. En algunos casos, cuando no existió detección directa a un determinado grupo de rickettsias o especies no disponible en un país, se tuvo en cuenta la detección indirecta por serología. Un total de 13 especies de *Rickettsia* han sido reportadas en Latinoamérica y el Caribe. Las especies más encontradas en los países fueron: *Rickettsia felis* (9 países), *R. prowazekii* (7 países), *R. typhi* (6 países), *R. rickettsii* (6 países), *R. amblyommii* (5 países) y *R. parkeri* (4 países). Los datos de las islas del Caribe (antillas menores o Indias occidentales), fueron agrupados en una sola área geográfica como un solo país. Ambas *R. bellii*, *R. akari* y *Candidatus 'R. andeane'* fueron reportadas en solo 2 países, mientras que *R. massiliae*, *R. rhipicephali*, *R. monteiroi*, y *R. africanae* fueron informadas en un solo país. En este caso *R. africanae* fue reportada en 9 islas de las Antillas menores. Para El Salvador, Honduras y Nicaragua, hasta ahora no se han reportado especies de *Rickettsia*, pero si evidencia serológica de infección humana y/o animal. Sin reportes de infección por *Rickettsia* permanecen: Belice, Venezuela, Guayana, Surinam y Paraguay. Además, a excepción de algunas islas del Caribe, muchas de ellas permanecen sin reportes. Un total de 12 especies de *Rickettsia* han sido documentadas en España y Portugal: *R. conorii*, *R. helvetica*, *R. monacensis*, *R. felis*, *R. slovacica*, *R. raoultii*, *R. sibirica*, *R. aeschlimannii*, *R. rioja*, *R. massiliae*, *R. typhi* y *R. prowazekii*. Entre estas, solamente *R. prowazekii*, *R. typhi*, *R. felis* y *R. massiliae* han sido documentados en Latinoamérica, España y Portugal. Los datos de este estudio permiten entender mejor la epidemiología de las rickettsias en Latinoamérica, Caribe, España y Portugal, y la distribución de los vectores.

Palabras clave: Ácaros, control de vectores, epidemiología, fiebre maculosa de las montañas rocosas, garrapatas. (Fuente: DeCS).

Introduction

The genus *Rickettsia* includes bacteria of the order rickettsiales in the alpha subdivision of the class Proteobacteria. They are Gram-negative coccobacilli in obligate association with eukaryote cells. A number of species have been identified in various terrestrial arthropods, and more recently in leeches and amoeba (1,2). Traditionally, pathogenic rickettsiae were classified into two groups: the typhus group (TG), composed of *Rickettsia prowazekii* and *Rickettsia typhi*, vectored by lice (*Pediculus humanus*) and fleas, respectively; and the spotted fever group (SFG), composed of more than 20 species mostly vectored by ticks (3). Other rickettsiae have shown antigenic and genetic particularities that preclude their inclusion in either the TG or SFG, such as *Rickettsia bellii* and *Rickettsia canadensis*, reported in ticks from the American continent (4,5). With the discovery of a variety of new rickettsiae

Introducción

El género *Rickettsia* incluye las bacterias del orden rickettsiales subdivisión alfa de la clase Proteobacteria, son cocobacilos Gram negativos de crecimiento obligado intracelular. Un número apreciable de especies ha sido identificado en varios artrópodos y recientemente en sanguijuelas y amebas (1,2). Tradicionalmente, las rickettsias patógenas fueron clasificadas en dos grupos: el tifus (TG) compuesta por *Rickettsia prowazekii* y *Rickettsia typhi*, cuyos vectores son piojos (*Pediculus humanus*) y pulgas respectivamente y, el grupo de las fiebres manchadas (SFG), compuesto por más de 20 especies con garrapatas como vector principal (3). Otras rickettsias han mostrado antigénica y genéticamente particularidades que impiden su inclusión en el TG o en el SFG, tales como *Rickettsia bellii* y *Rickettsia canadensis*, reportadas en garrapatas del continente americano (4,5). Con el descubrimiento de una variedad de nuevas rickettsias en diferentes órdenes de artrópodos terrestres, la mayoría

in different orders of terrestrial arthropods, mostly free-living, and also with genetic analysis of rickettsial plasmids as *R. felis*, the genus *Rickettsia* has been re-classified into different groups, including the SFG, TG, transitional group (TRG), *bellii* group (BG), *canadensis* group (CG), and several other basal groups (6,7).

During the last decades, there has been an increasing number of new *Rickettsia* species of unknown pathogenicity, mostly isolated from ticks (8,9). Some of them, previously considered non-pathogenic, were recently shown to be pathogenic to humans, such as the SFG *Rickettsia slovaca*, *Rickettsia aeschlimannii*, *Rickettsia massiliae*, and *Rickettsia monacensis* in Europe (8,9). In addition, *R. parkeri*, an 'old' SFG organism first reported in ticks in the 1939 was shown to be pathogenic 65 years later (10). These facts indicate that any novel described *Rickettsia* from invertebrate hosts, especially ticks, should be regarded as potentially pathogenic for humans.

The aim of this study was to analyze and to summarize the rickettsial reports in Latin America, Caribbean, Portugal and Spain.

Data collection

For the present study, retrospective data on bacteria of the genus *Rickettsia* were compiled from the available literature regarding all countries in Latin America, and Caribbean. Efforts were done to gather all available information for each country. Furthermore, for comparison purposes, we also compiled all *Rickettsia* species that have been reported in Spain and Portugal, since these two countries were responsible for the main colonization of Latin America. We considered all *Rickettsia* records reported for human and/or animal hosts, and/or invertebrate hosts (e.g., ticks, lice, fleas), which were considered to be the vector associated with the agent. In a few cases, when no direct detection of a given *Rickettsia* group TG or SFG or species was available for a given country, the indirect detection through serologic-based methods was considered, when this was the only record available.

viviendo de forma libre y también con los análisis genéticos de plásmidos como el de *Rickettsia felis*, el género ha sido reclasificado en diferentes grupos: TG, SFG, grupo transicional (TRG), grupo *bellii* (BG), grupo *canadensis* (CG) y otros grupos básicos (6,7).

En las últimas décadas ha habido un incremento de nuevas especies de *Rickettsia* de patogenicidad desconocida, muchas de ellas aisladas de garrapatas (8,9). Algunas de ellas previamente fueron consideradas no patógenas, pero recientemente demostraron ser patógenas para humanos, tal es el caso del SFG *Rickettsia slovaca*, *Rickettsia aeschlimannii*, *Rickettsia massiliae* y *Rickettsia monacensis* en Europa (8,9). Además, *R. parkeri* un viejo miembro del SFG reportado por primera vez en 1939, demostró 65 años más tarde ser patógena (10). Estos hechos demuestran que cualquier nueva rickettsia descrita en huéspedes invertebrados, especialmente garrapatas, deberían ser consideradas potencialmente patógenas para los humanos.

El objetivo de este trabajo fue el de analizar y resumir los estudios de *Rickettsia* en Latinoamérica, el Caribe, España y Portugal.

Recolección de datos

Para el presente estudio, se obtuvieron datos retrospectivos del género *Rickettsia* de la literatura científica de los países de Latinoamérica y de las islas del Caribe. Se realizaron esfuerzos para obtener toda la información disponible de cada país. Además, para efectos de comparación, también se obtuvo información de España y Portugal, ya que estos países fueron los que colonizaron principalmente a Latinoamérica. Se consideraron todas las rickettsias reportadas como patógenas tanto para humanos como animales o huéspedes animales, y/o huéspedes invertebrados (ej, garrapatas, piojos y pulgas) y que fueron consideradas ser el vector asociado al agente etiológico. Cuando no existió evidencia directa de *Rickettsia* del grupo TG o SFG u otra especie disponible en el cada país, la detección indirecta basada en la serología fue considerada como el único reporte disponible.

Geographic distribution of *Rickettsia*.

All available records on rickettsial infection on hosts (humans and animals) and vectors in Latin America and the Caribbean are represented by country, in tables 1-6. Spain and Portugal are presented in table 7.

A total of 13 *Rickettsia* species have been recorded in Latin America and the Caribbean. The species with the largest number of country confirmed records were *Rickettsia felis* (9 countries), *R. prowazekii* (7 countries), *R. typhi* (6 countries), *R. rickettsii* (6 countries), *R. amblyommii* (5 countries), and *R. parkeri* (4 countries).

Since the rickettsial records for the Caribbean islands were restricted to West Indies, we grouped these records like that they were represented as a single country (Table 6). *R. bellii*, *R. akari*, and *Candidatus 'R. andeane'* have been recorded in

Distribución geográfica de *Rickettsia*.

Todos los datos disponibles por infección de *Rickettsia* o huéspedes (humanos o animales) y vectores de Latinoamérica y el Caribe se presentan para cada país en las tablas 1-6. España y Portugal se muestran en la tabla 7.

Un total de 13 especies de *Rickettsia* se han documentado en Latinoamérica y el Caribe. Las especies con mayor frecuencia reportadas en los diferentes países fueron: *Rickettsia felis* (9 países), *R. prowazekii* (7 países), *R. typhi* (6 países), *R. rickettsii* (6 países), *R. amblyommii* (5 países) y *R. parkeri* (4 países).

Los datos de las islas de las antiguas Antillas, se agruparon como un solo país (Tabla 6). *R. bellii*, *R. akari* y *Candidatus 'R. andeane'* han sido reportados en solo 2 países cada uno, mientras que *R.*

Table 1. Infections by *Rickettsia* in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay.

| Species | Geographical distribution | Vector | Clinical cases confirmed | Animal infection | References |
|---|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------|------------------|------------|
| ARGENTINA | | | | | |
| <i>R. amblyommii</i> | Córdoba | <i>Amblyomma neumanni</i> | No | No | 11 |
| <i>R. bellii</i> | Córdoba | <i>A. neumanni</i> | No | No | 11,12 |
| | Santiago del Estero | <i>Amblyomma tigrinum</i> | | | |
| <i>R. massiliae</i> | Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires | <i>Rhipicephalus sanguineus</i> | Yes | No | 13,14 |
| <i>R. parkeri</i> | Buenos Aires | <i>Amblyomma triste</i> | Yes | No | 15-17 |
| <i>R. rickettsii</i> | Jujuy | <i>Amblyomma cajennense</i> | Yes | No | 18 |
| <i>Cand. 'R. andeanae'</i> ¹ | Córdoba | <i>Amblyomma parvum</i> | No | No | 12,19 |
| | Santiago del Estero | <i>Amblyomma pseudoconcolor</i> | | | |
| <i>R. felis</i> | Santa Fe | <i>Ctenocephalides felis</i> | No | No | 20 |
| <i>R. prowazekii</i> | Jujuy | <i>Pediculus humanus</i> | Yes | No | 21 |
| CHILE | | | | | |
| <i>R. felis</i> | Metropolitan ² | <i>Ctenocephalides felis</i> | No | Yes ³ | 22 |
| | Metropolitan | <i>Rhipicephalus sanguineus</i> | No | No | 23 |
| <i>R. prowazekii</i> | Metropolitan | <i>Pediculus humanus</i> | Yes | No | 24 |
| <i>Orientia tsutsugamushi</i> | Isla de Chiloé | Leech | Yes | No | 25 |
| URUGUAY | | | | | |
| <i>R. parkeri</i> | Canelones | <i>Amblyomma triste</i> | Yes ⁴ | No | 26-31 |
| | Maldonado | <i>A. triste</i> | Yes | No | 29,31 |
| | Montevideo | <i>A. triste</i> | Yes | No | 31 |
| | San José | <i>A. triste</i> | Yes | No | 27 |
| | Lavalleja | <i>A. triste</i> | Yes | No | 27 |
| <i>R. felis</i> | Montevideo | <i>Ctenocephalides felis</i> , <i>Ctenocephalides canis</i> | No | No | 32 |

¹Reported as *Rickettsia* sp. strain Argentina (33). ²Santiago metropolitan area. ³Serologic evidence of infection of cats by this *Rickettsia*.⁴Serologic evidence of infection in humans by this *Rickettsia*.

Table 2. Infections by *Rickettsia* in Brazil.

| Species | Geographical distribution | Vector | Clinical cases confirmed | Animal infection | References | |
|------------------------|---|--|--|------------------|------------|---------------------------------|
| BRAZIL | | | | | | |
| <i>R. rickettsii</i> | Bahia | <i>Amblyomma cajennense</i> | Yes | No | 34 | |
| | Espírito Santo | <i>Amblyomma cajennense</i> | Yes | Yes* | 35,36 | |
| | Minas Gerais | <i>A. cajennense</i> | Yes | Yes | 37-40 | |
| | | <i>Rhipicephalus sanguineus</i> | | | | |
| | Rio de Janeiro | <i>A. cajennense</i> <i>R. sanguineus</i> | Yes | No | 41-43 | |
| São Paulo | <i>Amblyomma aureolatum</i> <i>A. cajennense</i> <i>R. sanguineus</i> | Yes | Yes | 44-48 | | |
| | São Paulo | <i>Xenopsylla cheopis</i> | Yes | Yes | 49,50 | |
| | | <i>Amblyomma triste</i> <i>Amblyomma ovale</i> <i>Amblyomma dubitatum</i> <i>Amblyomma nodosum</i> | Yes | Yes* | 51-56 | |
| <i>R. felis</i> | Bahia | No | Yes | No | 58 | |
| | Minas Gerais | <i>Ctenocephalides felis</i> | Yes | No | 59,60 | |
| | Rio de Janeiro | <i>C. felis</i> | No | Yes* | 61 | |
| | Sao Paulo | <i>C. felis</i> <i>Ctenocephalides canis</i> <i>Polygenis atopus</i> | No | No | 52,62,63 | |
| | | Rondonia | <i>A. cajennense</i> <i>Amblyomma coelebs</i> <i>Amblyomma longirostre</i> | No | Yes* | 64-67 |
| <i>R. amblyommii</i> | São Paulo | <i>A. longirostre</i> | | | | |
| | Bahia | <i>A. longirostre</i> | | | | |
| | Pará | <i>A. longirostre</i> <i>Amblyomma geayi</i> | | | | |
| <i>R. rhipicephali</i> | Rondônia | <i>Haemaphysalis juxtakochi</i> | No | Yes* | 68,69 | |
| | São Paulo | <i>H. juxtakochi</i> | No | No | 70 | |
| <i>R. bellii</i> | Rondônia | <i>A. ovale</i> <i>Amblyomma oblongoguttatum</i> <i>Amblyomma scalpturatum</i> <i>Amblyomma humerale</i> <i>Amblyomma rotundatum</i> | No | No | 64 | |
| | | São Paulo | <i>A. aureolatum</i> <i>A. dubitatum</i> <i>A. ovale</i> <i>Amblyomma incisum</i> <i>A. nodosum</i> <i>Ixodes loricatus</i> <i>H. juxtakochi</i> | No | Yes* | 46, 51, 52, 54, 55, 70-72 |
| | | São Paulo | <i>A. incisum</i> | No | No | 73 |
| | | Spotted fever group | Paraná | No | Yes | Yes* |
| | Typhus group | Santa Catarina | | | | |
| | | Rio Grande do Sul | | | | |
| | | Minas Gerais | No | Yes | No | 78 |

* Serologic evidence of infection by this *Rickettsia*

Table 3. Infections by *Rickettsia* in Bolivia, Colombia, Perú and Ecuador.

| Species | Geographical distribution | Vector | Clinical cases confirmed | Animal infection | References |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|------------|
| BOLIVIA | | | | | |
| <i>R. parkeri</i> | CochaBamba | <i>Amblyomma tigrinum</i> | No | Yes | 79 |
| <i>R. prowazekii</i> | La Paz | <i>Pediculus humanus</i> | No | No | 80 |
| <i>Rickettsia</i> sp. ¹ | CochaBamba | <i>A. tigrinum</i> | No | No | 79 |
| COLOMBIA | | | | | |
| <i>R. rickettsii</i> | Cundinamarca | <i>Amblyomma cajennense</i> | Yes | No | 81,82 |
| | Antioquia | No | Yes | No | 83,84 |
| | Córdoba | No | Yes | No | 85,86 |
| <i>R. typhi</i> | Caldas | No | Yes | No | 84 |
| Spotted fever group | Córdoba | No | No | No | 87 |
| | Cundinamarca | No | No | No | 88 |
| | Córdoba | No | No | Yes | 89 |
| PERÚ | | | | | |
| <i>R. felis</i> | Piura | <i>Ctenocephalides felis</i> | No | No | 90 |
| <i>Cand. 'R. andeanae'</i> | Piura | <i>Amblyomma maculatum</i> | No | No | 90 |
| <i>R. prowazekii</i> | | <i>Ixodes boliviensis</i> | | | |
| | Apurimac | <i>Pediculus humanus</i> | Yes | No | 91,92 |
| | Arequipa | <i>P. humanus</i> | Yes | No | 91,92 |
| | Ayacucho | <i>P. humanus</i> | Yes | No | 91,92 |
| | Cuzco | <i>P. humanus</i> | Yes | No | 91,92 |
| Spotted fever group | Puno | <i>P. humanus</i> | Yes | No | 91,92 |
| | Cuzco | No | Yes | No | 90,93 |
| | Piura | No | Yes | No | 90,93 |
| | Junin | No | Yes | No | 94 |
| Typhus group | Loreto | No | Yes | Yes | 95 |
| | Loreto | No | Yes | Yes | 95 |
| | Loreto | No | Yes | Yes | 95 |
| ECUADOR | | | | | |
| <i>R. prowazekii</i> | Pichincha | <i>Pediculus humanus</i> | Yes | No | 96 |
| | Azuay | No | Yes | No | 97 |
| | Cañar | No | Yes | No | 97 |
| | Carchi | No | Yes | No | 97 |
| | Cotopaxi | No | Yes | No | 97 |
| | Chimborazo | No | Yes | No | 98 |
| | Imbabura | No | Yes | No | 97 |
| | Loja | No | Yes | No | 97 |
| | Tungurahua | No | Yes | No | 97 |
| | Napo | No | Yes | No | 97 |
| | Pastaza | No | Yes | No | 97 |

¹Close-related to *R. aeschlimannii*

only 2 countries each, whereas *R. massiliae*, *R. rhipicephali*, *R. monteiroi*, and *R. africae* have each been recorded in a single country in this case, *R. africae* has been recorded in nine islands from the West Indies.

Eight *Rickettsia* species have been associated with human diseases in Latin America and

massiliae, *R. rhipicephali*, *R. monteiroi* y *R. africae* han sido reportados en un solo país. En este caso *R. africae* ha sido documentada en nueve islas del Caribe.

Ocho especies de *Rickettsia* han sido asociadas con enfermedad humana en Latinoamérica y el Caribe: *R. rickettsii* agente de etiología de

Table 4. Infections by *Rickettsia* in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, French Guayana, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panamá .

| Species | Geographical distribution | Vector | Clinical cases confirmed | Animal infection | References |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|---|--------------------------|------------------|------------|
| COSTA RICA | | | | | |
| <i>R. rickettsii</i> | Alajuela | No | Yes | No | 99,100 |
| | Cartago | No | Yes | No | 100,101 |
| | Heredia | No | Yes | No | 100,102 |
| | Limón | <i>Haemaphysalis leporispalustris</i> | Yes | No | 100-103 |
| <i>R. akari</i> | Limón | No | Yes | No | 104 |
| <i>R. amblyommii</i> | | <i>Amblyomma cajennense</i> | No | No | 105 |
| <i>R. felis</i> | | <i>Ctenocephalides felis</i> | No | No | 105 |
| Spotted fever group | Alajuela | No | Yes | Yes | 106 |
| | Limon | No | Yes | Yes | 106 |
| EL SALVADOR | | | | | |
| Spotted fever group | No data | No | Yes ¹ | No | 107,108 |
| Typhus group | No data | No | Yes ¹ | No | 107,108 |
| GUATEMALA | | | | | |
| <i>R. prowazekii</i> | Highlands (>1.300 m) | No | Yes ¹ | No | 104 |
| <i>R. typhi</i> | Lowlands (<1.300 m) | No | Yes ¹ | No | 109 |
| FRENCH GUAYANA | | | | | |
| <i>R. amblyommii</i> | Régina | <i>Amblyomma coelebs</i> | No | No | 109 |
| HONDURAS | | | | | |
| Spotted fever group | No data | No | Yes ¹ | No | 104 |
| | Islas de la Bahía | No | Yes ¹ | No | 110 |
| | No data | No | no | Yes ² | 111 |
| NICARAGUA | | | | | |
| Spotted fever group | No data | No | Yes ¹ | No | 104 |
| PANAMÁ | | | | | |
| <i>R. rickettsii</i> | Panamá | <i>Amblyomma cajennense</i> <i>Amblyoma</i> sp. | Yes | No | 112-115 |
| | Coclé | No | Yes | Yes | 116 |
| <i>R. amblyommii</i> | Darién | <i>Dermacentor nitens</i> | No | No | 117 |
| | Coclé | <i>Amblyomma cajennense</i> | No | Yes | 116 |
| | | <i>Rhipicephalus sanguineus</i> | | | |
| | | <i>Dermacentor nitens</i> | | | |
| | Darién | <i>Amblyomma cajennense</i> <i>Rhipicephalus sanguineus</i> <i>Dermacentor nitens</i> | No | No | 115,117 |
| | Kuna Yala | <i>Rhipicephalus sanguineus</i> | No | Yes | 115 |
| <i>R. felis</i> | Coclé | <i>Ctenocephalides felis</i> | No | No | 116 |
| <i>R. typhi</i> | Panamá | No | Yes | No | 118 |

¹Serologic evidence of infection in humans by this *Rickettsia*, ² Serologic evidence of infection in animals.

Table 5. Infections by *Rickettsia* in México.

| Species | Geographical distribution | Vector | Clinical cases confirmed | Animal infection | References | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|------------|-----|
| MÉXICO | | | | | | |
| <i>R. rickettsii</i> | Baja California | <i>Rhipicephalus sanguineus</i> | Yes | No | 119,120 | |
| | Coahuila | <i>R. sanguineus</i> | Yes | No | 121 | |
| | Durango | <i>R. sanguineus</i> | Yes | No | 120,122 | |
| | Nuevo León | <i>Amblyomma imitator</i> | Yes | No | 123 | |
| | San Luis Potosí | <i>R. sanguineus</i> | Yes | No | 121,122 | |
| | Sinaloa | <i>R. sanguineus</i> | Yes | No | 124 | |
| | Sonora | <i>R. sanguineus</i> | Yes | No | 125-129 | |
| | Veracruz | <i>Amblyomma cajennense</i> | Yes | No | 119,130 | |
| | Yucatán | No | Yes | No | 131,132 | |
| <i>R. felis</i> | Yucatán | <i>Ctenocephalides felis</i> | Yes | No | 133-136 | |
| <i>R. akari</i> | Yucatán | <i>R. sanguineus</i> | Yes | Yes | 137,138 | |
| <i>R. prowazekii</i> | Chiapas | No | Yes | No | 139 | |
| | Hidalgo | No | Yes | No | 122 | |
| | Jalisco | No | Yes | No | 140 | |
| | Estado de México | No | Yes | No | 122,141 | |
| | Nuevo León | <i>Amblyomma</i> sp | Yes | No | 142,143 | |
| | Oaxaca | No | Yes | No | 122 | |
| | Puebla | No | Yes | No | 122 | |
| | Veracruz | No | Yes | No | 122 | |
| | <i>R. typhi</i> | Ciudad de México | No | Yes | No | 144 |
| | | Guerrero | No | Yes | No | 122 |
| Hidalgo | | No | Yes | No | 122 | |
| Jalisco | | No | Yes | No | 122 | |
| Estado de México | | No | Yes | No | 122 | |
| Michoacán | | No | Yes | No | 122 | |
| Nayarit | | No | Yes | No | 122 | |
| Nuevo León | | No | Yes | No | 122 | |
| Oaxaca | | No | Yes | No | 122,145 | |
| Puebla | | No | Yes | No | 122 | |
| Querétaro | | No | Yes | No | 122 | |
| Tamaulipas | | No | Yes | No | 122 | |
| Zacatecas | | No | Yes | No | 122 | |
| Yucatán | No | Yes | No | 146 | | |

Table 6. Infections by *Rickettsia* in Caribbean Islands.

| Species | Geographical distribution | Vector | Clinical cases confirmed | Animal infection | References |
|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|------------|
| CARIBBEAN ISLES | | | | | |
| <i>R. africae</i> | Guadaloupe | <i>Amblyomma variegatum</i> | Yes | Yes | 147,148 |
| | St. Kitts | <i>A. variegatum</i> | No | No | 149 |
| | Nevis | <i>A. variegatum</i> | No | No | 149 |
| | Dominica | <i>A. variegatum</i> | No | No | 150 |
| | Virgin islands | <i>A. variegatum</i> | No | No | 150 |
| | Montserrat | <i>A. variegatum</i> | No | No | 150 |
| | St. Lucia | <i>A. variegatum</i> | No | No | 150 |
| | Martinique | <i>A. variegatum</i> | No | No | 151 |
| | Antigua | <i>A. variegatum</i> | No | No | 152 |
| <i>R. felis</i> | St. Kitts | <i>Ctenocephalides felis</i> | No | No | 153 |
| <i>R. typhi</i> | Puerto Rico | <i>Xenopsylla cheopis</i> | Yes | Yes | 154 |

Tabla 7. Infections by *Rickettsia* in Spain and Portugal.

| Species | Geographical distribution | Vector | Clinical cases confirmed | Animal infection | References |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| SPAIN | | | | | |
| <i>R. conorii</i> | All Spain | <i>Rhipicephalus sanguineus</i> | Yes | No | 155 |
| <i>R. helvetica</i> | All Spain | <i>Ixodes ricinus</i> | No | No | 156 |
| <i>R. monacensis</i> | All Spain | <i>I. ricinus</i> | Yes | No | 9 |
| <i>R. felis</i> | All Spain, Canary Islands | <i>Ctenocephalides felis</i> | Yes | No | 157 |
| <i>R. slovaca</i> | All Spain | <i>Dermacentor marginatus</i> | Yes | No | 158 |
| <i>R. raoultii</i> | All Spain | <i>D. marginatus</i> | Yes | No | 158 |
| <i>R. sibirica</i> | Pais Vasco, La Rioja | No | Yes | No | 159 |
| <i>R. aeschlimannii</i> | Castilla León, La Rioja | <i>Hyalomma marginatum</i> | No | No | 160 |
| <i>R. typhi</i> | South Spain, Canary Islands | <i>Xenopsylla cheopis</i> , <i>C. felis</i> | Yes | No | 161 |
| <i>R. prowazekii</i> | All Spain | <i>Pediculus humanus</i> | Yes | No | 162 |
| <i>R. rioja</i> | Galicia, Pais Vasco, La Rioja | <i>D. marginatus</i> | Yes | No | 158,163 |
| PORTUGAL | | | | | |
| <i>R. conorii</i> | Continental Portugal | <i>Rhipicephalus sanguineus</i> | Yes | No | 164-168 |
| <i>R. helvetica</i> | Continental Portugal, Madeira Island | <i>Ixodes ricinus</i> | No | No | 166,169 |
| <i>R. monacensis</i> | Continental Portugal, Madeira Island | <i>I. ricinus</i> | No | No | 170,171 |
| <i>R. felis</i> | Continental Portugal, Madeira Island | <i>Archaeopsylla erinacei maura</i> , <i>Ctenophthalmus sp.</i> <i>Ctenocephalides felis</i> | No | No | 172,173 |
| <i>R. slovaca</i> | Continental Portugal | <i>Dermacentor marginatus</i> <i>Dermacentor reticulatus</i> | Yes | No | 166, 169, 174 |
| <i>R. raoultii</i> | Continental Portugal | <i>D. marginatus</i> | No | No | 171,175 |
| <i>R. sibirica</i> | Continental Portugal | <i>Rhipicephalus pusillus</i> , <i>Rhipicephalus bursa</i> , | Yes | No | 175,176 |
| <i>R. aeschlimannii</i> | Continental Portugal | <i>Hyalomma marginatum</i> | No | No | 166, 179, 177 |
| <i>R. typhi</i> | Continental Portugal, Madeira Island | <i>Leptopsylla segnis</i> | Yes | No | 175, 178- 180 |
| <i>R. prowazekii</i> | Continental Portugal | <i>Pediculus humanus</i> | Yes | No | 162 |
| <i>R. massiliae</i> | Continental Portugal | <i>R. sanguineus</i> | No | No | 166 |

Table 8. Imported cases of *Rickettsia* in Latin America and Iberian peninsula.

| Species | Country of origin | Country of event occurrence | Reference |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| <i>R. massiliae</i> | Argentina | Spain | 14 |
| <i>R. africae</i> | South Africa | Spain | 181 |
| <i>R. conorii</i> | Portugal | Brazil | 182 |
| <i>R. conorii</i> | South Africa | Brazil | 183 |

Caribbean: *R. rickettsii* causing rocky mountain spotted fever in Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Brazil and Argentina; *R. prowazekii* causing epidemic typhus in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru; *R. typhi* causing endemic typhus in Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, and Puerto Rico; *R. felis* causing flea spotted fever

la fiebre de las montañas rocosas en México, Costa Rica, Panamá, Colombia, Brasil y Argentina; *R. prowazekii* es el causante del tifus epidémico en Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Guatemala, México y Perú; *R. typhi* es el agente en Brasil, Colombia, Guatemala, México, Panamá y Puerto Rico; *R. felis* causa la fiebre manchada de las pulgas en México

in Mexico and Brazil; *R. parkeri* causing spotted fever in Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina; *R. africae* causing African tick bite fever in the Caribbean islands; *R. akari* causing rickettsial pox in Costa Rica and Mexico; and *R. massiliae* causing spotted fever in Argentina. This *R. massiliae* case was reported in a Spanish traveler presumed to have acquired the infection in Argentina, but suffered the disease after her return to Spain (Table 8). The distribution of *R. felis*-infected fleas included seven countries (Costa Rica, Panama, Caribbean islands, Peru, Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay) where no human cases of infection have been reported so far. A total of five *Rickettsia* species of unknown pathogenicity has been reported: *R. amblyommii* (5 countries), *R. bellii* (2 countries), *Candidatus 'R. andeanae'* (2 countries), *R. monteiroi* (1 country), and *R. rhipicephali* (1 country).

A total of 10 *Rickettsia* species have been reported in both Spain and Portugal: *R. conorii*, *R. helvetica*, *R. monacensis*, *R. felis*, *R. slovacica*, *R. raoultii*, *R. sibirica*, *R. aeschlimannii*, *R. typhi*, and *R. prowazekii*. In addition, *R. rioja* has been reported in Spain, and *R. massiliae* has been reported to occur in Portugal (Table 7). Amongst these *Rickettsia* species reported in Portugal and Spain, only *R. prowazekii*, *R. typhi*, *R. felis*, and *R. massiliae* have also been reported in Latin America.

Two fatal cases of spotted fever caused by *R. conorii* have been diagnosed in Brazil, however, patients of these cases were considered to have acquired the infection in Portugal and South Africa, respectively, and then suffered the disease few days after they arrived in Brazil (Table 8). Likewise, one case of *R. africae* infection was acquired in Africa before the patient returned to Spain.

For El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, although no specific *Rickettsia* species has been reported so far, there have been serological evidence of human and animal infection by spotted fever and/or typhus group rickettsioses in these countries (Table 4).

According to our compiled data, the following countries remain without any rickettsial records in Central America and South America: Belize, Venezuela, Guayana, Surinam and Paraguay. In addition, except for the 10 Caribbean islands of

y Brasil; *R. parkeri* es la causa de la fiebre manchada en Brasil, Uruguay y Argentina; *R. africae* produce la fiebre africana por garrapatas en las Antillas menores; *R. akari* es la causa de la viruela rickettsial en Costa Rica y México; *R. massiliae* es el agente de la fiebre manchada en Argentina, que fue reportada en un viajero español procedente de Argentina el cual se presume adquirió la infección en ese país suramericano (Tabla 8). La distribución de pulgas infectadas por *R. felis* incluyó siete países (Costa Rica, Panamá, Antillas menores, Perú, Argentina, Chile y Uruguay) donde sin embargo, no se han presentado casos humanos hasta ahora. Un total de cinco especies de *Rickettsia* aún no han sido descritas como patógenas para humanos: *R. amblyommii* (5 países), *R. bellii* (2 países), *Candidatus 'R. andeanae'* (2 países), *R. monteiroi* (1 país) y *R. rhipicephali* (1 país).

Un total de 10 especies de *Rickettsia* han sido reportadas en España y Portugal: *R. conorii*, *R. helvetica*, *R. monacensis*, *R. felis*, *R. slovacica*, *R. raoultii*, *R. sibirica*, *R. aeschlimannii*, *R. typhi* y *R. prowazekii*. Además, *R. rioja* ha sido reportada en España y *R. massiliae* en Portugal (Tabla 7). De estas especies de *Rickettsia*, solamente *R. prowazekii*, *R. typhi*, *R. felis* y *R. massiliae* han sido documentadas en Latinoamérica.

Dos casos fatales de fiebre manchada por *R. conorii* se diagnosticaron en Brasil, sin embargo, estos 2 pacientes adquirieron la infección en Portugal y Sur África respectivamente y desarrollaron la enfermedad unos días después de arribar a Brasil (Tabla 8). De igual manera, un caso de *R. africae* fue adquirido en África antes que el paciente regresara a España.

Con respecto a El Salvador, Honduras y Nicaragua, aunque hasta ahora no se han reportado específicamente especies de *Rickettsia*, se han demostrado evidencia serológica de infección humana y/o animal por los grupos de las fiebres manchadas y/o tifus (Tabla 4).

De acuerdo con los datos compilados, los siguientes países no presentan ningún tipo de registro de rickettsias en América Central y América del Sur: Belice, Venezuela, Guyana, Surinam y Paraguay. Además, a excepción de

this paper, many of them also remain without records. The geographical distribution of the 13 *Rickettsia* species that have been identified in Latin America and Caribbean are shown in figure 1.

Analysis of data

Until the end of the last century, only three *Rickettsia* species were known to occur in Latin America and Caribbean: *R. rickettsii*, *R. prowazekii*, and *R. typhi*. With the increasing use of molecular methods since the 1990s, other *Rickettsia* species were discovered in the continent, such as *R. africae* in West Indies (147), and *R. felis* in Mexico (133) and later in Brazil (59). In this new century, there was a bulk in the study of *Rickettsia* in Latin America, with the discovery of at least 8 other *Rickettsia* species in the continent during the last 10 years, mostly associated with ticks: *R. amblyommii*, *R. bellii*, *R. rhipicephali*, *R. parkeri*, *R. massiliae*, *R. akari*, *R. monteiroi*, and Candidatus '*R. andeanae*' (73,93,105,137).

las 10 islas del Caribe de este trabajo, muchas de ellas también permanecen sin registro. La distribución geográfica de las 13 especies de *Rickettsia* que se han identificado en América Latina y el Caribe se muestra en la figura 1.

Análisis de los datos

Al final del último siglo, solamente *R. rickettsii*, *R. prowazekii* y *R. typhi* eran conocidas en Latinoamérica y el Caribe. Con la aparición de los métodos moleculares en los años 90, otras especies fueron descubiertas tales como *R. africae* en las Antillas (147), y *R. felis* en México (133) y más tarde en Brasil (59). En este siglo, se han desarrollado una gran cantidad de investigaciones sobre *Rickettsia* en Latinoamérica y al menos 8 especies nuevas se han descubierto en los últimos 10 años, la mayoría asociadas con garrapatas: *R. amblyommii*, *R. bellii*, *R. rhipicephali*, *R. parkeri*, *R. massiliae*, *R. akari*, *R. monteiroi*, and Candidatus '*R. andeanae*' (73,93,105,137).

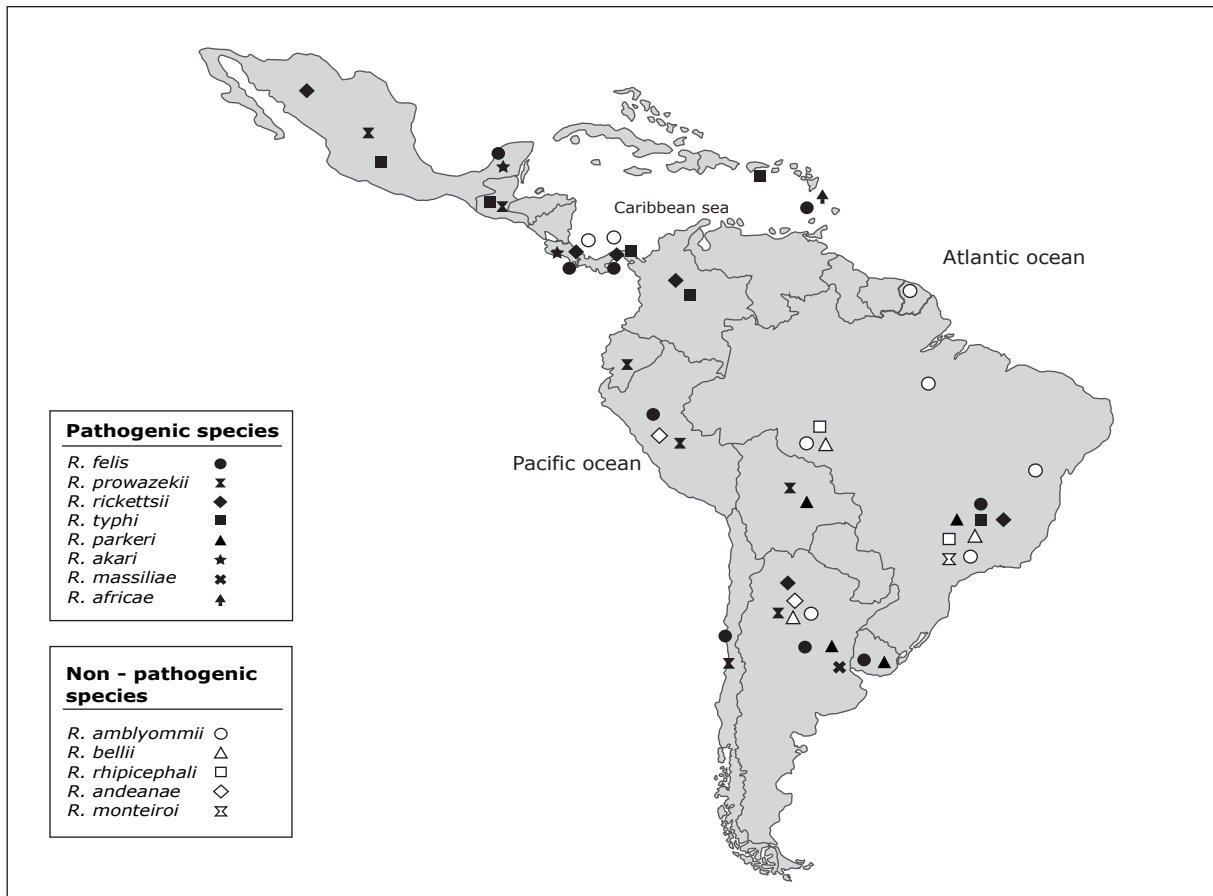


Figure 1. Geographical distribution of the 13 *Rickettsia* species in Latin America and Caribbean.

Considering the three species (*R. rickettsii*, *R. prowazekii*, and *R. typhi*) known to occur in the continent since the first half of the last century, only *R. rickettsii*, the agent of rocky mountain spotted fever, showed an increased expansion on its distribution area during the last decades. In fact, rocky mountain spotted fever is currently considered a re-emerging disease in Mexico, Central and South America (81,93,112,131).

The occurrence of *R. typhi* in the American continent has been practically neglected. Although this agent has been only scarcely reported in a few Latin American countries recently (49,146,184), most rickettsiologists believe that this rickettsia is widely distributed in the continent, together with its main hosts, synantropic rats and their flea *Xenopsylla cheopis* (185). Finally, the scarce number of recent records of *R. prowazekii* during the last few decades seems to be a result of decreased prevalence of its main vector, the body louse *Pediculus humanus* (185). Thus, almost all records of *R. prowazekii* in Latin America refer to the last century. More recent reports of human cases seem to have been restricted to highland areas of Peru, where body louse infestations are still a problem (185).

The significant advance in our knowledge on rickettsiology during the last decade in Latin America and Caribbean was certainly a result of the increased interest of researchers on this subject in the continent. However, this advance should be considered still very incipient, if we compare the modest list of *Rickettsia* species and rickettsial diseases of Latin America and Caribbean with the greater lists here reported for the Iberian countries, where rickettsiology has had much greater attention from researchers and governmental institutions. Indeed, the list of rickettsial diseases in Latin America will increase during the next years, not only in the countries with previous records, but also, in many of the American countries where *Rickettsia* has never been reported. A basal condition for this increase is the urgent need of increased capacity of Latin American laboratories to perform diagnosis of *Rickettsia*, since the absence of rickettsial diseases in such countries might be merely a result of absence of investigations.

Teniendo en cuenta que *R. rickettsii*, *R. prowazekii* y *R. typhi* se describieron a mediados del siglo veinte, solamente *R. rickettsii* el agente de la fiebre manchada de las montañas rocosas, mostró en Latinoamérica un incremento en su distribución y expansión en las últimas décadas. De hecho, la fiebre manchada de las montañas rocosas, es actualmente considerada una enfermedad reemergente en México, Sur y Centro América (81,93,112,131).

La presencia de *R. typhi* en el continente americano ha estado prácticamente descuidada. Sin embargo, este agente ha sido reportado en algunos países de Latinoamérica recientemente (49,146,184), la mayoría de los rickettsiólogos creen que *R. typhi* está ampliamente distribuida en el continente, junto con las ratas sinantropicas y su pulga *Xenopsylla cheopis* (185). Finalmente, el escaso número de datos recientes de *R. prowazekii* en las últimas décadas parece ser el resultado del descenso de la prevalencia de su principal vector el piojo del cuerpo *Pediculus humanus* (185). Por lo tanto, casi todos los datos de *R. prowazekii* en Latinoamérica se refieren al último siglo. Recientes estudios de casos humanos han sido reportados en áreas altas de Perú, donde las infestaciones por el piojo del cuerpo son todavía un problema (185).

El avance significativo del conocimiento sobre rickettsiología durante la última década en Latinoamérica y el Caribe fue sin duda el resultado del gran interés de los investigadores sobre esta materia en el continente. Sin embargo, este avance debería ser considerado todavía muy incipiente, si se tiene en cuenta la modesta lista de especies de *Rickettsia* y enfermedades rickettsiales de Latinoamérica y el Caribe, comparada con la de España y Portugal, donde la rickettsiología ha tenido mucha más atención de los investigadores e instituciones gubernamentales. De verdad, que la lista de las enfermedades por *Rickettsia* se incrementarán en Latinoamérica en los próximos años, no solamente en los países con reportes previos, sino en otros donde nunca ha sido reportada. Una condición básica para este incremento es la necesidad urgente de aumentar la capacidad de los laboratorios de Latinoamérica para llevar a cabo diagnóstico de *Rickettsia*, ya que la ausencia de la enfermedad en estos países podría ser meramente un resultado de la ausencia de investigaciones.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the Programa Iberoamericano de Ciencias y Tecnología para el Desarrollo (CYTED) to Red Iberoamericana para la Investigación y Control de las Enfermedades Rickettsiales (RIICER). To Janneth Gallegos M.Sc, Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo. Facultad de Ciencias. Riobamba, Ecuador. To Jorge Miranda M.Sc, University of Córdoba, Colombia for the technical assistance.

Agradecimientos

Este trabajo fue financiado por el Programa Ciencia y Tecnología para el Desarrollo (CYTED) para la Red Iberoamericana de Investigación y Control de Enfermedades por Rickettsia (RIICER). A Janneth Gallegos, M.Sc. Escuela Politécnica de Chimborazo. Facultad de Ciencias. Riobamba Ecuador. A Jorge Miranda, M.Sc. Universidad de Córdoba, Montería, Colombia.

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