Occurrence of Visceral Leishmaniasis in an area of absence of the main vectors

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Visceral Leishmaniasis is an important disease of worldwide distribution, which affects more than one million people annually and exhibits different clinical signs featured mainly by hepatomegaly, splenomegaly, anemia, leukopenia, fever, diarrhea and anorexia. The Visceral Leishmaniasis is caused by the protozoa *Leishmania (Leishmania) infantum* and it is transmitted primary by phlebotominae sand flies of the species *Lutzomyia longipalpis.* Although less important epidemiologically, there is evidence of the involvement of other species, such as *Lu. migonei* and *Lu. cruzi*, especially in areas of occurrence of Visceral Leishmaniasis and in the absence of *Lu. longipalpis.* The aim of this study was to assess the sand fly fauna in the municipality of Garanhuns, state of Pernambuco, Northeastern Brazil. From October 2018 to September 2019 and from September 2020 to January 2021 samplings were carried out monthly using CDC light traps. Each trap was placed at 6:00 pm to 6:00 am for three consecutive nights, and they were installed at 1.5 meters high, near shelters of animals, tree trunks, shady and humid locations. All collections were performed in 11 different points in both urban (n = 1), periurban (n=3) and rural (n = 7) areas. Each specimen was identified using morphological keys. A total of 148 sand flies were captured during the whole study and were identified as *Lu. evandroi*. Females (56.8%; 84/148) were more predominant than males (43.2%; 64/148). All sand flies were collected at periurban and rural areas. The reduced number of specimens may be related to environmental characteristics, high average altitude (896 m a.s.l.) and with an annual mean temperature of 20 ºC (ranging from 16 to 30 ºC). The detection of a suspected vector of *L. infantum* in an area of occurrence of VL indicates the putative role of this species as vector of the pathogen. Finally, further studies needs to be conducted to better address this issue.

Keywords: *Lutzomyia evandroi*; Vector disease; Phlebotomine fauna

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