PREVALENCE OF *Leptospira interrogans* IN ENVIRONMENTAL WATERS OF DASMARIÑAS CITY, CAVITE

An Undergraduate Research Presented to the

Faculty of the Biological Sciences Department

College of Science and Computer Studies

De La Salle University - Dasmariñas

Dasmariñas City

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree Bachelor of Science Major in Human Biology

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March 2014
ABSTRACT

Leptospirosis is recognized as an important public health problem worldwide, especially in tropical countries like the Philippines. It is one of the most common bacterial infections and waterborne illness caused by the pathogenic serovars of the spirochete *Leptospira*. A total of 45 water samples were collected from selected environmental waters in Dasmariñas City, Cavite such as slow-moving rivers, lakes, and deep well during April June and December. The physicochemical characteristics of selected environmental waters such as pH, conductivity, temperature, and salinity were measured. The samples were enriched in Ellinghausen-McCullough-Johnson-Harris (EMJH) broth before subjecting to LipL32 gene PCR method. The results showed that four samples from river (n=30) and two samples from deep well (n=6) rendered positive to LipL32 gene. However, no LipL32 genes were detected from the lake. Results show that no significant association between the different types of environmental water sample and LipL32 gene were observed \( (p>0.05) \). Further, no significant association between the sampling months such as April, June and December, and LipL32 gene \( (p>0.05) \) is observed, although flooding occurs during the month of December. The physicochemical characteristics such as pH, conductivity, and salinity also show no significant associations to the gene LipL32, however, temperature showed a significant association \( (p=0.023) \) and can be implied that any decrease or increase on water temperature has an effect on the survival of *Leptospira interrogans*. The presence of LipL32 genes in the river and deep well samples may help understand the factors contributing to the survival of *Leptospira* in the environment and provide necessary means in preventing leptospirosis among people living near river banks.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researchers wish to express their utmost gratitude and appreciation to the following:

Dr. Ronald Lagat, Dr. Cristina Salibay, and Dr. Arnold Fonollera, the panel members, for their brilliant comments, suggestions, significant outputs and thorough review of the paper that efficiently guided the researchers from proposal to completion of the paper;

Dr. Janeth Macawile, the biology laboratory supervisor and the staff of PCH203, for letting the researchers use and borrow laboratory materials and equipments, and for guiding them how to use it properly. Special thanks to Mang Juan for helping the researchers in collecting the samples from the field;

Ms. Hazel Anne Tabo who stood as the researchers’ second adviser in the laboratory, for her warmth compassion and dedication in helping the researchers during the experimental period.

Blockmates HUB4 Batch 2014, for all the encouragement, support and brightening up the mood of the researchers especially during stressful times.

Mr. Arnel P. Bondoc, Ms. Marlyn P. Bondoc, Mr. Jimmy R. Ramos, and Ms. Jocelyn C. Ramos, the researchers’ parents, for the never ending love, prayers and emotional support in times of distress and for all the sacrifices they have made in terms of financial support to complete this research.
Finally, praises and thanks to God, the Almighty and the Creator, for the wisdom and perseverance that He has bestowed upon the researchers throughout their life and for His showers of blessings during the research work in order to complete this paper successfully: "We can do everything through Him, who gives us strength." (Philippians 4: 13)
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