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## Cutaneous Leishmaniasis detected in Thiruvananthapuram: United efforts of Medical Practitioners and Veterinarians to prevent spread!

Cutaneous Leishmaniasis was detected in humans in the Anamala tribal settlement in Neyyar forest, Thiruvananthapuram. In Kerala, leishmaniasis is almost considered an exotic disease. Now this disease too is emerging in the capital. Dr. Jacob Alexander and Dr. Arun George visited the settlement along with the team of doctors from the Department of Preventive Medicine, Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram on 5-3-09 to assess the role of animals in spreading cutaneous leishmaniasis in the colony. Biotechnological tools are being employed under the leadership of Dr.E.Sreekumar in identifying the species.

Leishmaniasis is a vector-borne disease that is transmitted by sandflies and caused by protozoa of the genus *Leishmania*. They are transmitted to mammals via the bite of the female sandfly. Humans are generally considered incidental hosts.



*Skin lesions of Leishmaniasis*

Leishmaniasis in humans can be divided into cutaneous, mucocutaneous, visceral, and viscerotropic forms. For most species of leishmania, an animal reservoir is required for endemic conditions to persist. Infections in wild animals are usually not pathogenic, with the exception of dogs which may be severely affected.

Signs of leishmaniasis in canines are skin lesions, alopecia, irritative or exfoliative dermatitis in cutaneous form, enlarged lymph nodes, ocular signs, progressive loss of weight with decreased appetite, epistaxis and kidney failure in visceral leishmaniasis.



*Anamala Tribal Settlement Colony at Neyyar Forest*

Common hosts are domestic and feral dogs, rodents, foxes, jackals, wolves, raccoon-dogs, and hyraxes. In India, visceral leishmaniasis caused by *Leishmania donovani* does not appear to have an animal reservoir and is thought to be transmitted via human-sandfly-human interaction. An animal reservoir for cutaneous leishmaniasis caused by *Leishmania tropica* has not been identified, although it has been found in some dogs in endemic areas.

Pathogenesis of leishmaniasis is due to an immune reaction to the organism, particularly cell mediated immunity. Laboratory examination reveals a marked leukopenia with relative monocytosis and lymphocytosis, ane-

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