

**OBSERVATIONS ON DEMODICOSIS OF MAN' S SCALP: SEASONAL PEAKS IN THE PARASITES' LIFE CYCLE**

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Demodicosis of man's scalp has been rarely reported and anyhow it has been always considered as occasional. In 1951 Miskjian isolated some demodectic mites in that site, in some rosacea-like eruptions. In 1966 Fortunescu and Iles isolated *Demodex folliculorum* on a man's head. Later, in 1981, in the same site, demodectic mites were found, in Austria, by Bardach, Raff and Poitschek. Although in 1966 Akbulatova, observing 408 patients with lesions on their faces (due probably to the action of *Demodex* spp.), hypothesized that both clinical symptoms and the finding of parasites could be seasonal, no seasonal period for finding these mites throughout their life cycle was pointed out in any anatomical site of infestation. Our survey started four years ago with the isolation of *Demodex brevis* and *Demodex folliculorum* from the skin of the head in eight people suffering from seborrhaeic alopecia. Our parasitological research, carried out monthly for three years, has revealed a real seasonal incidence in the life cycle of these parasites, which can be in fact easily removed only in precise periods of the year. Furthermore, the study of the successive developmental stages has revealed extremely different biological cycles in the two species, and also a different reproductive activity during the year. The females of both species are found constantly, though in different quantity throughout the year; whereas the first male mites begin to be found from May as for *D.folliculorum* and from June as for *D.brevis*, both becoming more and more numerous up to September, peak of maximum distribution of these parasites. As regards *D.folliculorum*, embryonate eggs, larvae and nymphs can be found in June, as a sign of a first life cycle; larvae and nymphs of *D.brevis* can be found only between August and September, after a period of slow maturation of eggs. At the same time, *D.folliculorum* has a second life cycle nearly overlapping that of *D.brevis*. In October all developmental stages of parasites are found in a very low number, but they start again to be found, even if with a lower peak, in December as for *D.folliculorum* and in December/January as for *D.brevis*. Afterwards, from February to May there is a period of parasitary quiescence, during which only females of the two species, but in a very low number, are found. These observations are to be considered as preliminary ones for the low number of subjects examined; anyway, because of the discovery of an actual seasonality in the life cycle of the demodectic mites, our survey overturns the standard point of view on human demodicosis and implies, in particular, that demodicosis of man's scalp is not to be regarded any more as an occasional parasitism, but as a precise cronical disease with a slow course.