The Zoonotic Implications of Pentastomiasis in the Royal Python (Python Regius)


Pentastomes are worm-like endoparasites of the phylum Pentastomida found principally in the respiratory tract of reptiles, birds, and mammals. They cause a zoonotic disease known as pentastomiasis in humans and other mammals. The autopsy of a Nigerian royal python (python regius) revealed two yellowish-white parasites in the lungs, tissue necrosis and inflammatory lesions. The parasite was confirmed to be Armillifer spp (Pentastomid); this is the first recorded case of pentastomiasis in the royal python (Python regius) in Nigeria. This report may be an alert of the possibility of on-going zoonotic transmission of pentastomiasis from snake to man, especially in the sub-urban/rural areas of Nigeria and other West African countries where people consume snake meat.