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### Distribution of Soft Ticks and Their Natural Infection with *Borrelia* in a Focus of Relapsing Fever in Iran

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#### Abstract:

Tick-borne diseases such as relapsing fever and Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) are of public health importance in Iran. There are 471 reported cases of relapsing fever in 2003, according to the Ministry of Health of Iran. The number of cases has been increased in recent years. Its distribution is more or less prevalent in different parts of Iran. The aim of this study was to find out the fauna and natural infection of soft ticks with *Borrelia* in Qazvin Province, during their seasonal activity. The province covers 15821 km<sup>2</sup> between 48-45 to 50-50 east of Greenwich Meridian of longitude and 35-37 to 36-45 north latitude of the equator. For this purpose a field study was carried out in the region. A total of 54 villages from 19 districts were selected randomly and ticks were collected from their habitats according to the standard method. A total of 3197 Argasidae ticks were collected from human dwellings, poultry and animal shelters. They belonged to Argas and Ornithodoros genera which 36.8% were *Argas persicus*, 4% *A. reflexus*, 6.4% *O. canestrini*, 45.5% *O. lahorensis* and 7.3% *O. tholozani*. It should be noted that 12 ticks of *O. erraticus* were collected from 12 rodents borrows. We found that 8.82 % of *O. tholozani* ticks were infected with *Borrelia persica* and half of the *O. erraticus* were infected with *Borrelia microti*. All the people who are involved with veterinary activities should be aware of disease transmission by the ticks. In the endemic area of the disease tick control is recommended.

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