Epidemiology of Chagas' disease in northern Chile: Isozyme profiles of Trypanosoma cruzi from domestic and sylvatic transmission cycles and their association with cardiopathy

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Trypanosoma cruzi was isolated from 98 patients, 59 Triatoma infestans, 51 Triatoma spinolai, and 1 Octodon degus from northern Chile. With few exceptions, stocks originating from domestic hosts were classified, based on their isozyme profile, as principal zymodeme (Z)2, while sylvatic stocks from T. spinolai and the rodent O. degus showed Z1 profiles. These results indicate the existence of separate domestic and sylvatic transmission cycles. Clinical data and T. cruzi isozyme profiles from 107 chronic Chagas' disease patients showed no association between infecting T. cruzi zymodeme and the prevalence of chagasic cardiopathy. However,the age distributions of two groups of patients carrying different zymodemes were significantly different.