

# Presence of *Bartonella henselae* in cats, in Chile

## Presencia de *Bartonella henselae* en gatos: Cuantificación del reaervorio natural y riesgo de exposición humana de esta zoonosis en Chile

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The availability of a serologic test for cat scratch disease in humans has allowed the diagnosis of an increasing number of cases of this disease in Chile. Aim: To perform a serological survey for *Bartonella henselae* among cats in Chile. Material and methods: Blood samples from 187 cats living in three Chilean cities were obtained. IgG antibodies against *Bartonella henselae* were measured using indirect immunofluorescence. Blood cultures were done in 60 samples. The presence of *Bartonella henselae* in positive cultures was confirmed by restriction fragment length polymorphism polymerase chain reaction (RFLP-PCR). Results: The general prevalence of IgG antibodies against *Bartonella henselae* was 85.6%. No differences in this prevalence were found among cats younger or older than 1 year, or those infested or not infested with fleas. However domestic cats had a lower prevalence when compared with stray cats (73 and 90% respectively,  $p < 0.01$ ). *Bartonella henselae* was isolated in 41% of blood c