

# Wildlife as a source for livestock infections

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A bacterium possibly linked to Crohn's disease could be lurking in wild animals. According to research published in the open access journal *BMC Microbiology*, *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies paratuberculosis (Map), can be transmitted between wildlife and domestic ruminants, supporting the theory of wildlife reservoirs of infection.

A research team lead by Karen Stevenson, from the Moredun Research Institute in Scotland, used three different genotyping techniques to identify specific strains of Map in 164 samples taken from 19 different livestock and wildlife species from the Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, The Netherlands, Norway, Scotland and Spain. The results were combined to investigate sources of Map infections and show the possibility of transmission between wildlife and domestic ruminants.

"Identical genotypes were obtained from Map isolated from different host species co-habiting on the same property, strongly suggesting that interspecies transmission occurs", the authors say, adding, "Map infects a variety of wildlife and host species that potentially could be reservoirs for infection of domestic livestock and have serious implications for infection control".

Related to the bacteria causing tuberculosis in humans and in cows, Map causes severe diarrhea in ruminants, and has been suggested as a possible cause for Crohn's disease in humans. The role of wildlife reservoirs for [infection](#) needs further assessment, to determine whether transmission is passive or active, and to examine the likelihood of contact between wildlife and domesticated ruminants.

Source: BioMed Central ([news](#) : [web](#))

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