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Title: Epidemiology of Leptospirosis in North-Central Italy: fifteen years of serological data (2002-2016)

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Abstract: Leptospirosis is a re-emerging bacterial zoonosis. Central Italy is characterized by a geographic area that promotes Leptospira circulation. Data on seroepidemiological survey carried out from 2002 to 2016 in Central Italy were reported and discussed. Overall, 709 out of the 8488 (8.35%) tested sera were positive for Leptospira at the cut-off titer (1:100) and 218 (2.57%) at higher titer ( $\geq 1:400$ ). The highest percentages of positivity were recorded for coypus (22.86%), swine (19.74%) and bovine (13.03%). Pomona and Bratislava resulted the serovars more often detected, followed by Harjo and Icterohaemorrhagiae; while, a low number of positive sera was detected for serovars Ballum, Canicola and Tarassovi. Percentage of positive sera for each year slightly decreased from 2002 to 2008 and rose from 2009, a rise in this; particularly, high percentages of positive reaction were recorded in 2014 (17.23%), 2015 (19.61%) and 2016 (38.05%).

Bertelloni et al., *Epidemiology of Leptospirosis in North-Central Italy: fifteen years of serological data (2002-2016)*.

Highlights

- Fifteen years of serological data on *Leptospira* in animals were presented;
- An increase positivity to *Leptospira* in last years of investigation was recorded;
- Rise or fall of some serovars were observed;
- Some changes in hosts/serovars relations were detected;

1 **Epidemiology of Leptospirosis in North-Central Italy: fifteen years of serological**  
2 **data (2002-2016)**

3

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15 **Running Title:** *Leptospira* in North-Central Italy 2002-2016

16

17 **Abstract (ridurre a 150 parole)**

18

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32 **Key words:** *Leptospira*, epidemiology, seroprevalence; surveillance; zoonosis.

33

## 34 **1. Introduction**

35 Leptospirosis represents one of the most important widespread re-emerging bacterial zoonosis [1–3].  
36 Several outbreaks accounting for thousands of deaths worldwide highlight the importance of leptospirosis  
37 as a severely neglected infectious disease [4,5]. Leptospirosis has a wide distribution and occurs overall in  
38 tropical, subtropical and temperate zones, favoured by a large variety of both wild and domestic mammals  
39 which can play the role of natural reservoirs of *Leptospira* [1,6]. Some animals are asymptomatic renal  
40 carriers of this bacterium and they contribute to maintain the infection in a particular environment by  
41 constantly shedding *Leptospira* with urine [7,8]. Accidental contact with *Leptospira* infected urine causes  
42 the incidental infection and produces clinical diseases. While, specific *Leptospira* serovars which show close  
43 relationship with particular animal species develop host-maintained infection. The maintenance host  
44 generally does not develop symptoms, except after long time, but it acts as a natural source of a specific  
45 serovar [6,8]. In fact, *Leptospira* epidemiology is strictly related to the presence and widespread of the  
46 maintenance hosts species [9]. In recent years, some serovars seem to be prevalent and emerging,  
47 especially among wild animals, but also in domestic species. This occurrence suggests that the  
48 epidemiology of leptospirosis may change over time in animals as well as in humans [10].

49 Central Italy, and in particular Tuscany, is a geographic area characterized by some peculiarities which  
50 promote the presence and persistence of *Leptospira* in hosts and in environment: a) presence of wild  
51 animals which could represent potential reservoirs; b) presence of domestic animals raised in semi-  
52 extensive or extensive farms, which promotes contact with wild species; c) a significant presence of hunting  
53 activity; d) abundance of wetlands such as marshes, ponds and irrigation canals.

54 The main purpose of the present work was to refer data on a sero-epidemiological survey carried out in  
55 Central Italy, particularly in Tuscany, on serum samples collected from 2002 to 2016 in order to assess the  
56 prevalence of leptospirosis in domestic and wild animals and to compare it with the data from a previous  
57 epidemiological surveillance investigation carried out in the same area between 1995 and 2001 [9].

58

## 59 **2. Material and Methods**

60 From January 2002 to December 2016, 8488 serum samples were analysed for *Leptospira*. Sera were  
61 collected from healthy and ill animals belonging to 23 different species: sheep (*Ovis aries*, 2682 sera), swine  
62 (*Sus scrofa*, 1332 sera), bovine (*Bos Taurus*, 1328 sera), dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*, 1144 sera), wild boar  
63 (*Sus scrofa*, 479 sera), goat (*Capra hircus*, 327 sera), european brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*, 162 sera), red  
64 fox (*Vulpes vulpes*, 94 sera), horse (*Equus caballus*, 74 sera), roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*, 74 sera), coypus  
65 (*Myocastor coypus*, 70 sera), fallow deer (*Dama dama*, 65 sera), donkey (*Equus asinus*, 2 sera), ferret  
66 (*Mustela putorius furo*, 1 serum), cat (*Felis catus*, 4 sera), red deer (*Cervus elaphus*, 56 sera), wolf (*Canis*  
67 *lupus*, 43 sera), rats (*Rattus norvegicus*, 34 sera), mouflon (*Ovis musimon*, 8 sera), mouse (*Mus musculus*, 8  
68 sera), Guinea pig (*Cavia porcellus*, 2 sera), alpaca (*Vicugna pacos*, 1 serum) and bear (*Ursus arctos*, 1  
69 serum). Furthermore, 329 sera were of human origin and collected from men with clinical symptoms  
70 referable to leptospirosis. All sera were collected in North-Central Italy. Serological investigation was  
71 carried out with Microscopic Agglutination Test (MAT) [11]. The following serovars were used as live  
72 antigens: Icterohaemorrhagiae (strain Bianchi), Canicola (strain Alarik), Pomona (strain Mezzano), Tarassovi  
73 (strain Mitis Johnson), Grippotyphosa (strain Moscow V), Bratislava (strain Riccio 2), Ballum (strain  
74 Castellon 3) and Hardjo (strain Hardjoprajitno). Titers of 1:100 were considered positive; 2-fold serial  
75 dilutions were tested to determine the endpoint titer.

76

### 77 **3. Results**

78 Overall, 709 out of the 8488 (8.35%) sera resulted positive for *Leptospira* at the breakpoint titer (1:100). All  
79 samples collected from the following species resulted negative: alpaca, donkey, guinea pig, mouse, rat,  
80 ferret, cat, fallow deer, red deer, roe deer, mouflon, bear and wolf. Two hundred and eighteen sera (2.57%)  
81 resulted positive at high titer ( $\geq 1:400$ ). Table 1 reports the number of positive sera grouped by animal  
82 species. The highest percentages of positive sera were recorded for coypus, swine and bovine at low  
83 (22.86%, 19.74% and 13.03%, respectively) and high titer (5.61%, 6.31% and 3.16%, respectively). None  
84 horse sera showed positivity to titer of 1:400 or higher. Coypus, wild boar, fox and hare resulted the unique  
85 wild species that showed positive reactions. In particular, 22.86%, 8.56%, 3.04% and 1.85% of sera resulted

86 positive at titer  $\geq 1:100$  for coypus, wild boar, fox and hare, respectively. Among the 329 human sera  
87 examined, 10 (4.26%) resulted positive and 3 (1.06%) showed a titer of 1:400 or higher.

88 Table 2 shows the distribution of positive sera grouped by serovars and animal species. Pomona and  
89 Bratislava resulted the serovars more often detected, with 267 and 224 positive reactions (titer 1:100),  
90 respectively. Moreover, for the same serovars, 68 and 67 sera, respectively showed positivity to high titer  
91 ( $\geq 1:400$ ). A low number of positive sera was detected for serovars Ballum, Canicola and Tarassovi (13, 28  
92 and 32 sera, respectively). Hare was the only species in which positivity to serovar Icterohaemorrhagiae  
93 was never found. Similarly, goat resulted the only species in which serovar Bratislava was never detected.

94 Positivity to serovars Icterohaemorrhagiae and Canicola was found mainly in dog sera. Serovars Pomona  
95 and Bratislava resulted more often associated with swine. Most of the sera positive to Tarassovi were from  
96 wild boar. Positivity to serovars Grippotyphosa and Hardjo was detected especially in bovine sera.

97 Among human sera, positivity to six serovars was recorded: Icterohaemorrhagiae, Canicola, Pomona,  
98 Grippotyphosa, Bratislava and Ballum. Icterohaemorrhagiae was the most detected serovar. Positive  
99 samples were never found among human sera from 2004 to 2012. In 2013, 2014 and 2016 positive sera  
100 were 1/20, 4/9 and 1/11, respectively; all these sera showed an antibody titer  $< 1:400$ .

101 Percentage of positive sera for each year slightly decreased from 2002 to 2008; in particular in 2008 only 1  
102 out of 597 (0.17%) sera resulted positive at titer of 1:100. From 2009, the percentage of positive sera  
103 increased; particularly, in 2014, 2015 and 2016 a high percentage of positive sera was recorded: 17.23%,  
104 19.61% and 38.05%, respectively. Figure 1 reports the percentage of positive sera to *Leptospira interrogans*  
105 and to each serovar detected in each year of investigation.

106 Table S1 (supplementary material) reports the distribution of positive sera at titer  $\geq 1:100$  and  $\geq 1:400$  in  
107 relation to animal species, *Leptospira* serovars and year of detection.

108

#### 109 **4. Discussion**

110 Leptospirosis is a worldwide public health and veterinary problem, frequently underestimated,  
111 characterized by a downward trend [12]. Climatic changes, modifications of ecological niches, emergence

112 of new potential maintenance-hosts could represent the most important factors involved in *Leptospira*  
113 epidemiology. The environmental and geographic features of North-Central Italy area can be considered as  
114 the optimal conditions for *Leptospira* spreading [13–21]. Tuscany, the main region involved in this  
115 serological survey, is characterized by some peculiarities which promote the presence and persistence of  
116 *Leptospira* in hosts and in the environment. Increasing presence of wild animals, potential reservoirs,  
117 presence of animals raised in semi-extensive or extensive farms, hunting activity and presence of wetlands  
118 such as marshes, ponds, lakes and irrigation canals are the main factors involved in enzootic trend of  
119 leptospirosis in Italy.

120 In this study, serological results obtained with a panel of eight *Leptospira* serovars were reported. Strains  
121 employed as live-antigens was chosen considering the serovars more often detected, by isolation or  
122 serology, in Italy [10,13,17,18,22–24]; indeed, positivity to other serovars were rarely reported [25].  
123 Moreover, these strains were employed routinely in our Laboratory for research and diagnosis, and, for this  
124 reason, all serum samples considered were tested with same MAT antigens.

125 In this survey, the total apparent prevalence of antibodies against *Leptospira* registered during 2002-2016  
126 was 8.65%. In a previous investigation, carried out in the same area during 1995-2001, the total apparent  
127 prevalence was 6.81% [9]. It is not possible to exclude that this increase could be due to the different  
128 number of available samples and the proportion and representation of the different animal species  
129 included in the study. However, the increase could be also related to a changing of some environmental  
130 conditions (rainfall, temperature, ecc...) which promoted the rise and spreading of new serovar/strains or  
131 the re-emerging of endemic strains. The observed increase of positive sera was mainly related to the last  
132 years of this investigation (2013-2016) and could be due to an increase of rainfall in the investigated area,  
133 especially in wetlands.

134 Serological investigations highlighted different apparent prevalence trends for each of the eight *Leptospira*  
135 serovars tested. Apparent prevalence of positive sera decreased from 1995-2001 to 2002-2016 for  
136 *Icterohaemorrhagiae* (from 22.24% to 13.78%), Bratislava (from 55.04% to 24.69%) and Hardjo (from  
137 22.08% to 14.22%). Furthermore, apparent prevalence increases for Canicola (from 0% to 3.08%), Pomona



138 (from 0.64% to 29.43%), Grippytyphosa (from 0% to 9.81%), Tarassovi (from 0% to 3.52%) and Ballum (from  
139 0% to 1.43%) [9]. The results obtained from previous and from this investigation could be different for  
140 some reasons. In the previous work [9], carried out in the same investigated area, employing the same  
141 *Leptospira* serovars and strains as antigens, the threshold titer was 1:400, conversely in this investigation  
142 the threshold titer used was 1:100. Furthermore, the number of tested sera for each animal species could  
143 have influenced the detected total apparent prevalence.

144 Considering the distribution of positivity detected year by year, it is possible to observe a decrease in the  
145 percentage of positive sera detected from 2002 to 2008 and an increase starting from 2009. In particular,  
146 from 2014 it was registered an impressive increase of *Leptospira* positive samples (Figure 1a).

147 Annual fluctuations in *Leptospira* spreading and seropositivity is well documented [26] and could be related  
148 to many factors as climate changing, rains and drought springs. Fluctuations in observed data could be  
149 related not only to environmental modifications, but also to hosts changing: variations in exposure to  
150 *Leptospira* by animal, introduction of new wild animal species, changing in herds management. As concerns  
151 this last point, in lasts years breeding management changed from indoor intensive to extensive or semi-  
152 extensive with outdoor access in order to improve animal welfare. Furthermore, it could be related to  
153 modifications of *Leptospira* epidemiology: introduction of new serovars/strains or change in host specificity  
154 range by classical serovars/strains.

155 As for serovar Icterohaemorrhagiae, seropositivity reflected more or less the observed global trend.  
156 However, positivity to this serovar was constantly detected, even if during some years with only few  
157 positive samples (Figure 1b). This is an expected result, indeed, Icterohaemorrhagiae is maintained by rats  
158 and it is the serogroup most often involved in animal and human infection in many parts of the world [27].  
159 Only few samples scored positive to serovar Canicola during the first years of investigation and no positive  
160 sera were detected between 2006 and 2012 (Figure 1c). It seems that this serovars re-emerged from 2013.  
161 In nature, Canicola is maintained by dog and vaccination programs carried out for about 50 years in this  
162 species led to its disappearance [28]. Data obtained in this investigation showed in recent years an increase

163 of positivity to Canicola in animals different to dogs. This finding could suggest a possible change in host  
164 range of this serovar.

165 Serovar Pomona seemed to be almost disappeared from the investigated area for more than fifteen years  
166 (Figure 1d). Ten positive reactions were recorded from 2002 to 2013, furthermore, a previous investigation  
167 conducted in the same geographical area [9], reported an apparent prevalence of 0.64% (4 out of 9885  
168 sera) between 1995 and 2001. From 2014, the number of positive sera increased, and Pomona was the  
169 most detected serovar in 2016. In the last years of the investigation, a large number of swine sera were  
170 analysed, and this could have influenced the improved detection of positivity to Pomona. However, a  
171 considerable number of positive reactions was found also in sera of species other than pig, supporting the  
172 hypothesis of the rise of this serovar in investigated area.

173 Circulation of serovar Grippytyphosa in the investigated area was slightly documented during this  
174 investigation. This is in accordance with previous reports conducted in the same region and in Italy [9,10].  
175 From 2013, a slight increase in the detected number of positive reactions was registered (Figure 1e). This  
176 trend is in accordance with many studies conducted in Europe, where Grippytyphosa is considered an  
177 emerging serovar [29–32]. Considering the studied area, it is not possible to exclude that this occurrence  
178 could be related to the import from East Europe of wild animals for hunting purposes, in particular hares  
179 [33,34].

180 Positivity to serovar Tarassovi was never detected from 2002 to 2013 (Figure 1f). This trend is in line with  
181 other National surveys [9,10], indeed, in past years, Tarassovi showed a very limited diffusion in Italy. In  
182 2014, a peak of positivity was registered which could resemble an epidemic event. Positive reactions were  
183 found mainly in wild boar, but also in domestic animals. In 2015 and 2016, the number of positive sera  
184 decreased and probably it will return to zero. These results suggest that Tarassovi is not disappeared from  
185 our territory, and infections could occur, since Tarassovi is probably maintained in the environment by  
186 *reservoirs* other than swine, as suggested by previously reported data in Italy [10].

187 As regard serovar Bratislava, its trend reflects the global trend observed. Every year, positivity to this  
188 serovar was detected, with exception of 2008 and 2011 (Figure 1g). This finding could probably be expected

189 considering the high number of positive *reservoir* hosts present in investigated area, as hedgehog and wild  
190 boar [35,36]. Generally, Bratislava is reported as an emerging serovar, but considering the obtained data it  
191 could be considered as endemic in investigated area.

192 Considering the abundance of cattle and, especially, sheep herds in the studied area, the low number of  
193 positivity for serovar Hardjo for many years was unexpected. Indeed, this serovar were frequently detected  
194 in Italy and sometimes it was involved in clinical outbreaks [9,10,25]. As for the other serovars, after a silent  
195 period of about 12 years, from 2014, an increase of positive sera for Hardjo was registered, suggesting a  
196 restart of the circulation of this serovar in investigated area. More focused investigations should be  
197 probably required to better understand this finding. It may be supposed it could be related to the increase  
198 of outdoor herds, especially for dairy cows, related to the increased attention for animals welfare.

199 Furthermore, animal species different to domestic ruminants could be infected and this could contribute to  
200 the rise of serovar Harjo.

201 During the investigated period, serovar Ballum showed a very limited diffusion. In 2014, a slight increase of  
202 seropositivity was registered, but it was a limited event. In Italy, this serovar was rarely detected in  
203 serological investigations [9,10,13,18,22], even if it was recently isolated from small mammals in Tuscany  
204 [24]. These observations could suggest a low virulence for animals and man of Ballum strains circulating in  
205 our territory.

206

#### 207 4.1. Bovine

208 The total apparent prevalence in bovine increase from 0.005% (1995-2001) [9] to 13.03% (2002-2016). In  
209 cattle, higher prevalence of serovar Hardjo has been detected: 7.08% (94/132) and 2.26% (30/1328) sera  
210 scored positive at titer  $\geq 1:100$  and  $\geq 1:400$ , respectively. These data confirm that bovine represents the  
211 main maintenance-host for serovar Hardjo (serogroup Sejroe) [7]. Relative high number of positive  
212 reactions was also detected for serovars Pomona and Grippotyphosa in cattle sera. A percentage of 4.15%  
213 (55/1328) and 0.23% (3/1328) were positive for Pomona at titer  $\geq 1:100$  and  $\geq 1:400$ , respectively. Severe  
214 infections in cattle due to this serovar is uncommon and usually occur in young animals [7]. Nevertheless,

215 based on a recent National survey, Pomona resulted the second representative serovar in cattle in Italy  
216 [10]. The relative high number of positivity could be related to the semi-extensive or extensive farms. These  
217 types of breeding promote the contact with wild animal, in particular wild boars. As concern serovar  
218 Grippotyphosa, 3.61% (48/1328) and 0.38% (5/1328) sera scored positive at titer  $\geq 1:100$  and  $\geq 1:400$ ,  
219 respectively. Positivity to this serovar resulted higher than that observed in previous investigations  
220 conducted in Italy [9,10]. However, in recent years, in other European countries, serovar Grippotyphosa  
221 was often detected in cattle and occasionally involved in clinical leptospirosis outbreaks [26,29,30]. In  
222 accordance with these Authors, our data seem to identify Grippotyphosa as an emerging serovars in cow.  
223 Low level of positivity was scored for serovars Icterohaemorrhagiae, Canicola, Tarassovi, Bratislava and  
224 Ballum, in accordance with other studies [9,10].

225

#### 226 4.2. Dog

227 The total apparent prevalence in dog increased from 5.42% (1995-2001) to 8.65% (2002-2016) [9].  
228 Icterohaemorrhagiae and Bratislava resulted the most represented serovars, with 5.07% (58/1144) and  
229 4.19% (48/1144) sera positive at titer  $\geq 1:100$ , respectively. These results are in accordance with data  
230 available in literature [7,9,10]. Percentages of 1.40% (16/1144) and (0.17% 2/1144) of sera scored positive  
231 for serovar Pomona at titer  $\geq 1:100$  and  $\geq 1:400$ , respectively. Infection by serovar Pomona in dog produce  
232 a severe disease characterized by lethargy, fever, inappetence, diffuse haemorrhage, renal and liver failure  
233 [37,38]. In Europe, infections in dogs caused by this serovar are rare and reported only in few countries of  
234 East-Europe, such as Romania [7]. For this reason serovar Pomona was not included in dog vaccines [39].  
235 Our data seem to suggest an increasing incidence of this serovar in dog during last years (Table S1)  
236 [9,10,13]. Taking into account the increase of Pomona positivity in dog and the severe symptoms, the  
237 research on this serovar could be intensify. As regards serovar Canicola, 1.22% (14/1144) and 0.09%  
238 (1/1144) sera resulted positive at titer  $\geq 1:100$  and  $\geq 1:400$ , respectively. This result confirms the decreasing  
239 of this serovar in many European countries during the last years due to the use of vaccines [7,40]. Low  
240 number of positive sera was observed for Grippotyphosa and Tarassovi with 0.35% (4/1144) and 0.09%

241 (1/1144) of positive sera at titer  $\geq 1:100$ , respectively. In Europe, Grippotyphosa is considered an emerging  
242 serovar in dogs [13,29,31,32] and was included in leptospirosis dog vaccine. Contrary to what is generally  
243 observed in Europe, data obtained by this investigation suggest a limited spreading of Grippotyphosa in  
244 dogs among investigated area. In Europe, Tarassovi is rarely reported in dog [10,17]. This is in accordance  
245 with our data, since only one serum was found positive to this serovar, even if at high titer (1:800)  
246 suggesting a recent and probably acute infection. No positivity was encountered for serovars Hardjo and  
247 Ballum, which are rarely detected in dog as suggested by several investigations [7,10,40].

248

#### 249 4.3. Swine

250 The total apparent prevalence in swine increased considerably from 9.16% (1995-2001) [9] to 19.74%  
251 (2002-2016). It is known that swine is the maintenance host for serovar Pomona (serogroup Pomona),  
252 serovar Tarassovi (serogroup Tarassovi) and serovar Bratislava (serogroup Australis) [7]. As expected,  
253 Pomona and Bratislava were the serovars more often detected in this species. For Pomona, 12.01%  
254 (160/1332) and 3.38% (45/1332) of swine sera have been detected positive at titer  $\geq 1:100$  and  $\geq 1:400$ ,  
255 respectively. While for Bratislava, 9.83% (131/1332) and 2.33% (31/1332) of sera scored positive at titer  $\geq$   
256  $1:100$  and  $\geq 1:400$ , respectively. Bratislava is considered an emerging serovar and it could be the cause of  
257 abortion and other reproductive disorder in swine. However, some strains become “pig-adapted”, causing  
258 subclinical infections [41]. In different European countries, during last years, Bratislava was the more  
259 detected serovar in pig sera samples [10,42]. Despite the fact that swine represents the *reservoir* host for  
260 Pomona, in last years, the seroprevalence of this serovar in pig was low [9,10,42]. It is noteworthy that, in  
261 this investigation, the seroprevalence of Pomona in swine was increasing, in contrast with other surveys.  
262 On the other hand, only 0.15% (2/1332) and 0.08% (1/1332) of sera were detected positive for Tarassovi at  
263 titer  $\geq 1:100$  and  $\geq 1:400$ , respectively. These data confirm that this serovar seems to disappear, as  
264 suggested by other investigations [9,10,42]. The cause could be the wide use of vaccination program in  
265 swine farm [43,44]. As regard serovar Canicola, 0.45% (6/1332) of sera scored positive at titer 1:100/1:200  
266 (3 at titer of 1:100 and 3 at titer of 1:200). Some studies demonstrated that swine could be infected by

267 serovar Canicola and that intraspecies transmission is possible [42,45]. For this reason, pigs are considered  
268 a new possible potential maintenance host for serovar Canicola, although its real epidemiological role is not  
269 still clarified [46,47]. The results of this investigation confirm the circulation of this serovars among swine in  
270 Italy too. No positive sera were detected for serovars Grippotyphosa and Ballum, and only 0.15% (2/1332)  
271 and 0.08% (1/1332) of sera resulted positive for Icterohaemorrhagiae and Hardjo, respectively. These data  
272 are in accordance with other studies [9,10,42].

273

#### 274 4.4. Horse

275 The total apparent prevalence obtained in horse was characterized by a remarkable decrease from 11.08%  
276 (1995-2001) [9] to 2.89% (2002-2016). This species is susceptible to a wide range of incidental infections,  
277 that are often characterized by absence of clinical symptoms. Bratislava is the most common serovar  
278 detected in horses, but also Grippotyphosa, Pomona, Icterohaemorrhagiae, Autumnalis, Sejroe, Canicola,  
279 and Ballum serogroups are occasionally reported [7,48]. The results of this investigation confirm this  
280 evidence; indeed, positive reactions were detected only for Icterohaemorrhagiae (1.24% - 3/242 sera),  
281 Bratislava (0.83% - 2/242 sera), Pomona (0.41% - 1/242 sera) and Hardjo (0.41% - 1/242 sera). The low  
282 number of positive sera detected in horse could be related to few clinical samples or few specimens with  
283 clinical manifestations. Also, the sera could have been collected after equine uveitis manifestation. Equine  
284 uveitis, also known as “moon blindness”, is an ocular disease consequent to *Leptospira* infection in horse,  
285 that occurs after the acute phase of leptospirosis when the antibody titer decrease [48].

286

#### 287 4.5. Sheep and Goat

288 The total apparent prevalence observed in sheep decreased from 12.13% (1995-2001) [9] to 3.13% (2002-  
289 2016). These results could seem unexpected. Indeed, in investigated area sheep flocks are breed  
290 extensively or semi-extensively and this could promote contact with wild animals. However, our data are in  
291 line with a recent survey conducted by the Italian reference center for leptospirosis [10]. Despite sheep  
292 represent the second maintenance host for serovar Hardjo [49], infection by this serovar could induce

293 subclinical or clinical disease [7], with abortion, stillbirth, birth of weak lambs, agalactia and infertility [50–  
294 52]. Although the results of this investigations do not show a high number of positive samples (0.71% -  
295 19/2682) for serovar Hardjo, almost all have a titer  $\geq$  1:400 (12 sera out of 19 positive). These data could  
296 suggest the occurrence of clinical infection in sheep confirming the high virulence of serovar Hardjo for this  
297 animal species. Sheep could be infected also by other serovars [7]. In this investigation, relative high  
298 number of positivity was reported for serovars Pomona (1.12% 30/2682), Icterohaemorrhagiae (0.75% -  
299 20/2682) and Grippotyphosa (0.75% - 20/2682) at titer  $\geq$  1:100. These results are in disagreement with  
300 previous investigations carried out in the same area [9] and in Italy [10,25]. Pomona and  
301 Icterohaemorrhagiae could cause disease in sheep, in particular they have been associated with  
302 reproductive disorders [53,54]. Furthermore, other positive reactions were found in sheep sera for  
303 Bratislava (0.52%), Tarassovi (0.30%), Ballum (0.19%) and Canicola (0.04%) at titer  $\geq$  1:100. Seropositivity for  
304 these *Leptospira* serovars was previously reported in sheep where they could represent the cause of  
305 accidental infections [55]. Even if the presence of these serovar was reported in other studies, the reactivity  
306 to all tested serovars detected in sheep during this investigation seems unusual. It could be probably  
307 explained by the presence of wild boars, hares, hedgehogs, rodents (as mice and rats) and other wild  
308 animals, which represent maintenance hosts for different serovars, in the areas where the sampling was  
309 conducted [23,29,33,40,56–58].

310 For goat sera, only 2.75% (9/327) of samples resulted positive for Icterohaemorrhagiae at titer  $\geq$  1:100,  
311 among them 6 were positives at titer  $\geq$  1:400. Our data confirm that goats are not very susceptible to  
312 *Leptospira* infection, as reported in literature by other study, where seropositivity was described for  
313 serovar Hardjo [51,59,60], Icterohaemorrhagiae [60,61] and Poi [25].

314

#### 315 4.6. Wild boar

316 The total apparent prevalence in wild board increased from 2.39% (1995-2001) [9] to 8.56% (2002-2016).

317 The highest prevalence was detected for serovars Tarassovi and Bratislava. Similarly to swine, wild boar is a  
318 maintenance host for serovars Pomona, Tarassovi and Bratislava [7]. For Tarassovi, 3.76% (18/479) and

319 0.63% (3/479) of sera scored positive at titer  $\geq$  1:100 and titer  $\geq$  1:400, respectively. This result disagrees  
320 with other studies previously conducted in the same area of investigation and in Italy. In Tuscany, from  
321 1995 to 2001 no positive sera for Tarassovi has been detected in wild boar [9,14]. In Italy, recent surveys  
322 indicate the same trend: no Tarassovi seropositivity or few positive samples (2 out of 1987 sera) were  
323 found in wild boar [10,22,62]. However, high seroprevalence for this serovar has been reported in different  
324 European Countries [63–65]. Wild boar could represent the *reservoir* host of this serovar, disappeared in  
325 other domestic animal, and it could contribute to maintain Tarassovi strains in environment. Furthermore,  
326 the Tarassovi high prevalence in investigated area could be connected to the import in Tuscany of wild boar  
327 from East Europe Countries for hunting [34,63,64]. The second most representative serovar in wild boar  
328 was Bratislava: 2.51% (12/479) and 0.21% (1/479) of positive sera have been detected at titer  $\geq$  1:100 and  
329 titer  $\geq$  1:400, respectively. Bratislava is one of the most worldwide spread *Leptospira* [26], consequently,  
330 this result was expected. Indeed, this serovar is frequently detected in wild boar in Italy [9,10,14,22,62] and  
331 in Europe [63–67]. Unexpected data has been recorded concerning positivity to Pomona, considering that  
332 wild boar is a potential *reservoir*, as reported by other studies carried out in Europe [66]. Only 0.84%  
333 (4/479) and 0.21% (1/479) of sera resulted positive for this serovar at titer  $\geq$  1:100 and titer  $\geq$  1:400,  
334 respectively. These data were unexpected, but similar to those reported by other Authors in Italy  
335 [10,22,62]. As concerns serovar Hardjo, 2.92% (14/479) and 1.46% (7/479) of sera scored positive at titer  $\geq$   
336 1:100 and titer  $\geq$  1:400, respectively. This serovar is generally associated to cattle and sheep [7] and its  
337 detection in wild boar seems singular. In Italy, no Hardjo seropositivity has been founded previously in wild  
338 boar [10,22,62]. However, Hardjo seems to be the most prevalent serovar in East Europe in wild boar [66].  
339 For this reason, our finding could be related to the import of animals from East Europe for hunting  
340 purposes. Nevertheless, in investigated area there are a lot of free-range farms of cattle and sheep and it is  
341 plausible to assume that wild boar became infected after direct or indirect contact with these animals.  
342 Moreover, half of positive sera showed an antibody titer higher than 1:400, suggestive of recent and  
343 possible acute infection. For all these reasons it could not be excluded a possible involvement of wild boar  
344 in epidemiology of *Leptospira* serovar Hardjo, as maintenance or incidental host. Furthermore, positivity to



345 other serovars was detected at titer  $\geq 1:100$ :0.62% (3/479) of sera for serovar Icterohaemorrhagiae, 0.21%  
346 (1/479) of sera for serovar Canicola, 0.21% (1/479) of sera for serovar Grippotyphosa and 0.21% (1/479) of  
347 sera for serovar Ballum . These animals could easily come in contact with *Leptospira* due to their lifestyle  
348 and positivity to many different serovars is sporadically, but constantly reported [10,22,63–67].

349

#### 350 4.7. Other wild animals

351 Excluding wild boar, seropositivity in wild animals was recorded only for hares, foxes and coypus. It is well  
352 documented that hare could be infected by different *Leptospira* serovars, especially Grippotyphosa  
353 [22,33,56,68]. Only 1.85% (3/162) of hares sera scored positive in this survey, 0.62% (1/162) for Bratislava  
354 (titer 1:200) and 1.23% (2/162) for Ballum (titer 1:100 and 1:200, respectively).

355 Fox was reported as incidental host for different serovars, such as Icterohaemorrhagiae, Ballum and  
356 Bratislava [10,58,69]. Low number of fox sera examined in this investigation resulted positive for  
357 *Leptospira*, in particular for serovar Icterohaemorrhagiae (1.06% - 1/94) and Bratislava (3.19% - 3/94). Only  
358 1.06% (1/94) of sera resulted positive at titer  $\geq 1:400$ , for serovar Bratislava.

359 For both these species, a low percentage of positive sera was detected compared to the other reported  
360 surveys. This could suggest a weak involvement of these two animal species in *Leptospira* epidemiology in  
361 investigated area.

362 As regard coypus, some studies highlighted the circulation of the same serovars among these animals and  
363 its possible role as reservoir host [18,70–72]. In accordance with these studies, an high percentage of sera,  
364 32.86% (23/70), analyzed in this investigation scored positive to *Leptospira*. Positivity was recorded for  
365 Grippotyphosa (20.00% - 14/70), Bratislava (11.43% - 8/70) and Icterohaemorrhagiae (1.43% - 1/70).  
366 Furthermore, 4.29% (3/70) and 2.86% (2/70) of sera exhibited a titer  $\geq 1:400$  for serovars Bratislava and  
367 Grippotyphosa, respectively; these data could suggest a recent infection, confirming the circulation of these  
368 serovars in coypus. Positivity to Bratislava and Icterohaemorrhagiae was frequently reported, while  
369 positivity to Grippotyphosa, which is considered an emerging serovar in Europe, could open new interesting  
370 epidemiological scenarios.

371 No positive reactions were detected in sera from wild ruminants: roe deer, red deer, fallow deer and  
372 mouflon. Our data confirm the marginal role that these animals have in the epidemiology of *Leptospira*  
373 according to the low number of positivity reported in literature [9,10,17,73,74].  
374 No positivity was detected in sera collected from other wild animals (wolves, rats, bear and ferret).  
375 However, small number of samples were analyzed for these species and it is not possible to advance robust  
376 epidemiological hypothesis.

377

#### 378 4.8. Human

379 The total apparent prevalence observed in man slightly decreased from 5.60% (1995-2001) [9] to 4.26%  
380 (2002-2016). Humans are incidental hosts for *Leptospira* and they could be infected by serovars maintained  
381 by animals in a particular geographical region. In past years in Europe, human leptospirosis had a  
382 fluctuating trend, but different confirmed cases were always registered. In particular in Italy about 40  
383 human cases were annually recorded from 2008 to 2015 [75,76]. According to the present survey,  
384 Icterohaemorrhagiae remained the most detected serovar from human sera. However, positivity to all  
385 tested serovars, with exception of Tarassovi and Hardjo, was recorded. This finding could suggest a change  
386 also in human leptospirosis related to a modification of *Leptospira* epidemiology in investigated area.

387

#### 388 **5. Conclusion**

389 Leptospirosis is probably the most widespread, (re-)emerging and prevalent zoonotic disease in the world.  
390 However, due to the difficult to exactly diagnose the disease clinically and by laboratory test, sometime, it  
391 could be not recognized and consequently severely neglected. For this reason, the true spread and increase  
392 of leptospirosis remains probably unknown [12]. Considering that many domestic and wild mammals  
393 represent natural carriers of pathogenic leptospires, acquire epidemiological information on animal  
394 leptospirosis could be helpful for both human and breeding animal health. Despite that isolation and strains  
395 characterization should have an highest diagnostic value, serology represent for some disease, such as  
396 leptospirosis, the best instrument for epidemiological purpose. The results of this investigation provide

397 information on *Leptospira* epidemiology in a defined geographical area involving many different animal  
398 species, maintenance and accidental hosts, and humans. Moreover, a long period of time was considered  
399 and this allowed to put in evidence a fluctuation in *Leptospira* positivity recovery, as also suggested by  
400 other Authors; this trend involved both the total percentage of positive animals registered year by year and  
401 the serovars encountered. Our results seem to highlight an increase of *Leptospira* in North-Central Italy and  
402 a change in serovars potentially involved in animal and human infection.  
403 Several animals resulted infected by unusual *Leptospira* serovars and this finding could suggest a change in  
404 host range for some serovars, that may promote the adaptation to new hosts. Constant serological  
405 monitoring results essential to control the evolution of the dynamics of *Leptospira* epidemiology and it  
406 could represent the basis to lead future investigations focused on specific animals and that must include  
407 both serological that isolation or molecular techniques.

408

409

410 **Conflict of interest statement**

411 All authors declare no conflict of interests.

412

413

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635 **Figure**

636

637 **Figure 1:** Percentage of positive sera detected for *L. interrogans* and for each *Leptospira* serovars year by  
638 year.

639 Note: Ic: Icterohaemorrhagiae; Ca: Canicola; Po: Pomona; Tar: Tarassovi; Gri: Grippotyphosa; Br: Bratislava; Ba: Ballum; Har: Har

**Table 1:** Number of positive sera to *Leptospira* at low ( $\geq 1:100$ ) and high titers ( $\geq 1:400$ ).

Species	Examined	Titer			
		$\geq 1:100$	%	$\geq 1:400$	%
<b>Bovine</b>	1328	173	13.03	42	3.16
<b>Dog</b>	1144	99	8.65	27	2.36
<b>Goat</b>	327	9	2.75	6	1.83
<b>Horse</b>	242	7	2.89	0	0.00
<b>Wild boar</b>	479	41	8.56	13	2.71
<b>Hare</b>	162	3	1.85	0	0.00
<b>Coypus</b>	70	16	22.86	4	5.71
<b>Sheep</b>	2682	84	3.13	38	1.42
<b>Swine</b>	1332	263	19.74	84	6.31
<b>Fox</b>	94	4	3.04	1	0.91
<b>Human</b>	329	10	4.26	3	1.06
<b>Total</b>	8488	709	8.35	218	2.57

**Table 2:** Numbers of positive serological reactions detected for the different *Leptospira* serovars at low ( $\geq 1:100$ ) and high titers ( $\geq 1:400$ ) in relation to animal species.

Animal species	Titer	Serovar								Total	Positive to more serovars
		Ic	Ca	Po	Gri	Tar	Br	Har	Ba		
Bovine	$\geq 100$	21	4	55	48	3	3	94	4	232	44*
	$\geq 400$	4	1	3	5	1	1	30	2	47	3*
Dog	$\geq 100$	58	14	16	4	1	48	0	0	141	33*
	$\geq 400$	16	1	2	0	1	19	0	0	39	11*
Goat	$\geq 100$	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0
	$\geq 400$	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0
Horse	$\geq 100$	3	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	7	0
	$\geq 400$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wild boar	$\geq 100$	3	1	4	1	18	12	14	1	54	11*
	$\geq 400$	1	0	1	0	3	1	7	1	14	1
Hare	$\geq 100$	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	3	0
	$\geq 400$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coypus	$\geq 100$	1	0	0	14	0	8	0	0	23	7*
	$\geq 400$	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	5	3
Sheep	$\geq 100$	20	1	30	20	8	14	19	5	117	21*
	$\geq 400$	2	0	17	6	3	1	12	1	42	3*
Swine	$\geq 100$	2	6	160	0	2	131	1	0	302	40*
	$\geq 400$	0	0	45	0	1	41	0	0	87	3
Fox	$\geq 100$	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	4	0
	$\geq 400$	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Human	$\geq 100$	7	2	1	2	0	2	0	1	15	2*
	$\geq 400$	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0
Total	$\geq 100$	125	28	267	89	32	224	129	13	907	158
	$\geq 400$	31	2	68	14	9	67	49	4	244	24*

Note: Ic: Icterohaemorrhagiae; Ca: Canicola; Po: Pomona; Tar: Tarassovi; Gri: Grippityphosa; Br: Bratislava; Ba: Ballum; Har: Hardjo;

\*Some sera resulted positive to more than 2 different serovars

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Supplementary material

**Table S1:** Distribution of positive sera at titer  $\geq 1:100$  and  $\geq 1:400$  in relation to animal species, *Leptospira* serovars and year of detection

Animal species	Serovars	Titer	Year															Total	
			2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		
Bovine	Ic	$\geq 100$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	18	0	0	21
		$\geq 400$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
	Ca	$\geq 100$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4
		$\geq 400$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Po	$\geq 100$	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	45	55
		$\geq 400$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Tar	$\geq 100$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
		$\geq 400$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Gr	$\geq 100$	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	34	48
		$\geq 400$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	5
	Br	$\geq 100$	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	10
		$\geq 400$	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	7
	Ba	$\geq 100$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4
		$\geq 400$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
	Har	$\geq 100$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	88	0	94
		$\geq 400$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	27	0	29
Dog	Ic	$\geq 100$	10	8	6	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	12	8	3	4	58
		$\geq 400$	5	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	16
	Ca	$\geq 100$	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	2	5	13
		$\geq 400$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Po	$\geq 100$	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	10	16
		$\geq 400$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
	Tar	$\geq 100$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
		$\geq 400$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Gr	$\geq 100$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	4
		$\geq 400$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Br	$\geq 100$	6	9	6	2	2	1	0	1	2	0	1	6	3	4	4	4	47
		$\geq 400$	2	1	5	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	0	0	18
	Ba	$\geq 100$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		$\geq 400$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Har	$\geq 100$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		$\geq 400$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Goat	Ic	$\geq 100$	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	9	



		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	6
	Ca	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Po	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Tar	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Gr	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Br	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Ba	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Har	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Horse	Ic	≥ 100	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Ca	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Po	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Tar	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Gr	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Br	≥ 100	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Ba	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Har	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wild boar	Ic	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	3
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Ca	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Po	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	4
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Tar	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	5	1	18
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
	Gr	≥ 100	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Br	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	5	12
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Ba	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Har	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	8	14

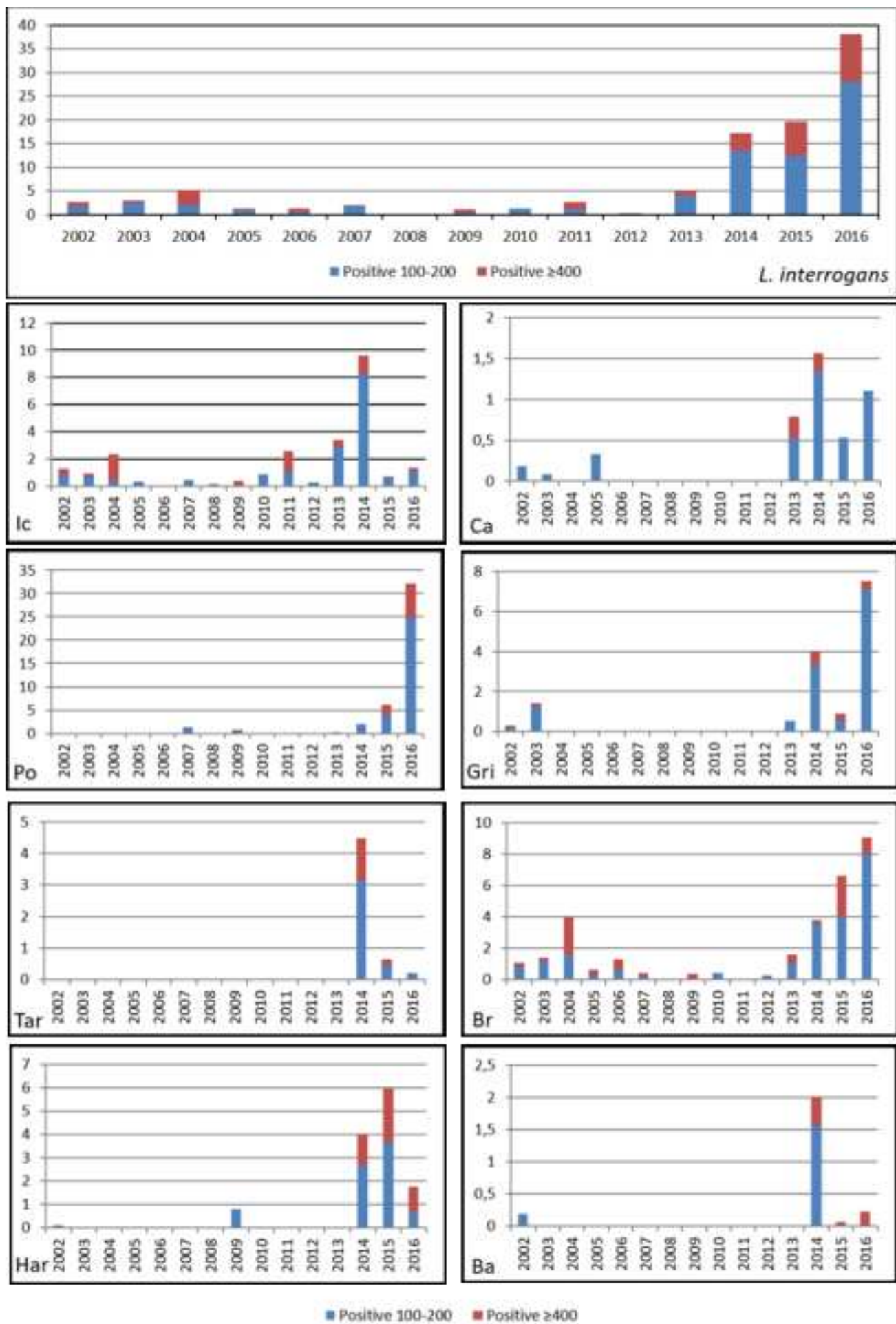
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	5	7
Hare	Ic	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Ca	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Po	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Tar	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Gr	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Br	≥ 100	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Ba	≥ 100	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Har	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coypus	Ic	≥ 100	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Ca	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Po	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Tar	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Gr	≥ 100	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
		≥ 400	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Br	≥ 100	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
		≥ 400	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Ba	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Har	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sheep	Ic	≥ 100	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	7	0	20
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
	Ca	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Po	≥ 100	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	23	29
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	17
	Tar	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	0	8
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	1	0	22
	Gr	≥ 100	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	14	0	18
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	6
	Br	≥ 100	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	2	0	14
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Ba	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	5

		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Har	≥ 100	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	11	0	19
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	10	0	12
Swine	Ic	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Ca	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	6
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Po	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	98	62	160
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	12	45	
	Tar	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Gr	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Br	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	99	32	131
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	38	33	71	
	Ba	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Har	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fox	Ic	≥ 100	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Ca	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Po	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Tar	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Gr	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Br	≥ 100	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
		≥ 400	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Ba	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Har	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Human	Ic	≥ 100	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	6
		≥ 400	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Ca	≥ 100	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Po	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Tar	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Gr	≥ 100	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
		≥ 400	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Br	≥ 100	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2

		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Ba</b>	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Har</b>	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>Ic</b>	≥ 100	14	11	6	1	0	2	1	1	4	10	1	13	43	12	6	125
		≥ 400	5	3	5	0	0	0	0	1	0	6	0	2	6	2	1	31
	<b>Ca</b>	≥ 100	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	7	9	5	28
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
	<b>Po</b>	≥ 100	0	1	0	0	0	6	0	2	0	0	0	1	9	103	145	267
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	34	33	68
	<b>Tar</b>	≥ 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	11	1	32
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	3	0	9
	<b>Gr</b>	≥ 100	3	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	18	15	34	89
		≥ 400	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	6	2	14
	<b>Br</b>	≥ 100	12	17	10	2	2	2	0	1	2	0	1	6	17	111	41	224
		≥ 400	3	3	6	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	43	5	67
	<b>Ba</b>	≥ 100	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	1	1	13
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	4
	<b>Har</b>	≥ 100	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	18	100	8	129
		≥ 400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	38	5	49

Note: Ic: Icterohaemorrhagiae; Ca: Canicola; Po: Pomona; Tar: Tarassovi; Gri: Grippytyphosa; Br: Bratislava; Ba: Ballum; Har: Hardjo

Figure  
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Bertelloni et al., *Epidemiology of Leptospirosis in North-Central Italy: fifteen years of serological data (2002-2016)*.

Conflict of interest statement

All authors declare no conflict of interests.