

Prevalence of internal parasites in hamsters in pet shops in Wrocław

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Hamsters are one of the best-selling companion animals. However, are these animals offered in pet shops free of parasites, and if not, are they infected with parasites that are also dangerous to humans?

The fecal samples of clinically healthy 27 Syrian hamsters, 48 Djungarian hamsters and 22 Roborovski hamsters (together 97 animals) were collected from 12 pet shops in Wrocław. The fecal samples were examined with the direct smear Lugol's staining method and a flotation technique using a Fecalyzer/Fecasol kit. Four samples of faeces found to include *Giardia* spp. cysts were examined with rapid tests: SNAP Giardia and Witness Giardia.

In total, 75% of hamsters were infected by one or more species of parasite. The prevalence of *Giardia* spp. infection was 64%, *Trichosomoides nasalis* – 9%, *Syphacia* spp. – 6% and *Hymenolepis nana* – 3%. The results of rapid tests to detect *Giardia duodenalis* were positive.

Hymenolepis nana and *Giardia duodenalis* infections in hamsters from pet shops are potentially dangerous for humans. Animals offered for sale should be effectively dewormed and periodically tested for parasites.