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# MADOQUA

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## SHORT NOTE

*Oochoristica truncata* (Cestoda) infestation of *Agama aculeata* and *A. planiceps* (Reptilia: Agamidae) in the Windhoek area

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## ABSTRACT

*Oochoristica truncata* (Cestode) showed a low incidence of infestation in both *Agama aculeata* and *Agama planiceps* (Reptilia: Agamidae) in the Windhoek area. No infestation trends emerged during the survey.

## INTRODUCTION

*Oochoristica truncata* infestation has been reported for various reptiles including *Agama hispida distanti*, *A.a. colonorum*, *A. inermis*, and *A. sanguinolenta*. However, nothing seems to have been reported for *A. aculeata* or *A. planiceps*.

From March 1987 to February 1990, 145 male and 128 female subadult and adult specimens of *A. aculeata*, and 86 male and 104 female subadult and adult specimens of *A. planiceps*, were collected in the Windhoek area. All the specimens were killed by a chloroform overdose within 48 h of capture and their guts examined for parasites. The cestodes found were fixed in 70% ethanol and sent via the Department of Parasitology of the University of Pretoria at Onderstepoort to the British Museum of Natural History, where they were identified as *Oochoristica truncata*. Representative specimens are in the author's collection. The total number of worms in each reptile was established by counting the number of scolices present.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Infestations occurred in the first part of the small intestine. In *A. aculeata* 6% of males and 5% of females were infested, while in *A. planiceps* the rate of infestation was only 1% in males and nil in females. One or two cestodes were found per specimen: the exception was a female *A. aculeata* containing 19 worms.

Both agama species are insectivorous, with ants constituting their major prey item. *A. planiceps*, however, tends to have a substantially greater amount of plant material (including seeds) in its guts (pers. obs.). This could account for the different rates of cestode infestation. As no information exists on the life-cycle and therefore the intermediate hosts of *O. truncata*, this must remain as conjecture.

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