



Name with a meaning

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Every parasite has a name typical of itself. These names are used daily for communication among parasitologists and in publications. Although names are not useful to parasites, they are useful to the scientists who named them and call them.

Scientific names are derived either from Greek or Latin. In order to get over the monotony of such dry and dreary names, an attempt has been made in this paper to offer glimpses of the scientific names of various canine parasites and to present a vivid picture of what they actually mean.

Before going to the details of canine parasites, we should know what a parasite is. Parasite is a Greek word that means "located beside" (para:beside, sitos:location). It refers to something that is always located beside the host.

Parasites include nematodes, cestodes and trematodes. Nematodes are thread like worms (nema: thread); cestodes, ribbon like worms (cestos: ribbon) while trematodes mean perforated.

In *Toxocara*, toxon is a Greek word which denotes 'arrow' i.e., the presence of

large cervical alae at the anterior portion of these nematodes gives it an arrow-headed appearance and hence the apt name *Toxocara*.

Ancylostoma caninum, the hookworm species comprises of ankylon (hooked) and stoma (mouth) both being Greek. On the contrary, it states the presence of hooks or teeth in the buccal cavity of the nematode, whereas caninum is derived from "caninus" which is the adjective of canis (dog).

It is interesting to note that the Latin word *Dirofilaria immitis* is formed from "Dirus" meaning horrible or cruel and filaria meaning thread like. Of course it is a cruel thread like worm. Immitis also means cruel and the scientific name implies on the severity of the parasite.

Spirocerca lupi is so called because this nematode is coiled or twisted like a spiral; "spiros" is spiral and "circum" means twisted.

Strongyloides stercoralis, however is quite uncommon in dogs. It is derived from the terms "Strongylos" referring to cylindrical and "oides" to appearance i.e., a nematode with a cylindrical appearance. And stercoralis is derived from "stercus" which means dung. This is a parasite whose eggs hatch in the caecum discharging the first stage larvae in the faeces.

Now for *Echinococcus granulosus*. It means a parasite, so tiny as a grain but carrying a scolex with spines like a hedge hog (Echinos-spine/hedge hog and coccus/granulosus - grain).

Taenia hydatigena comprises of Taenia that means a band or ribbon and hydatigena which is a genus, producing a watery vesicle (hydatis-watery vesicle).

Diphyllobothrium is a Greek word where dis means double, phyllon leaf and bothrios a dimple or crease. This parasite has a bilobed ovary and weak muscular grooves or bothria on the scolex as organs of attachment.

Similarly *Dipylidium caninum* represents a cestode of dog with double set of genital organs per segment

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resembling a bunch of grapes on either side.

Fasciola is a Latin term which means a little ribbon, while *Paragonimus* is a Greek word, wherein the ventral sucker, ovary and testes are located beside the genital pore as in *P. westermanni* (para-beside, gonimus - genital).

The protozoan parasite *Trypanosoma* is coined from two Greek words. *Tru*panon is borer and *soma* is body. That is to say, *Trypanosoma* is something which enters the body by piercing or boring with the help of vectors.

Hepatozoon is life in hepatics. Since the asexual reproduction or schizogony of this canine protozoan takes places in the endothelial cells of the liver, it has been named so.

Ectoparasites also possess very captivating and meaningful names. *Ctenocephalides* is coined from *kteis* (comb), *kephale* (head) and *ides* (like) pertaining to the comb like head of the dog flea.

The dog tick, *Rhipicephalus sanguineus* is formed of *rhipis* (fan), *kephale* (head) and *sanguineus* (bloody). The hexagonal basis capitulum gives a fan like appearance to the head of the tick and of course it is a blood sucking awesome vector.

The mite *Otodectes* bites and gnaws the ears of dog. The word originates from Greek, where *otos* stands for ear and *dektos* for biting.

The dog louse *Trichodectes* literally means something that cuts the hair (*Thrix*-hair and *dektos*-cut).

Sarcoptes is a Greek term which says that which cuts or carves while *Psoroptes* is the mange of the hide (*Psoro*-mange and *ptessin* - hide).

Various species of mosquitoes have very alluring meanings. *Culex* is just a mosquito in Latin. *Anopheles* being Greek means an intruder. *Aedes* is Greek and it means disagreeable as it produces a very uncomfortable environment.

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Supportive therapy is very important in management of animals with babesiosis. Intravenous fluids should be administered in animals that are dehydrated or in shock. Whole blood or packed erythrocytes should be transfused to patients that are severely anaemic. Treatment of concurrent stress factors especially gastro-intestinal parasitism is also important.

Prevention

The primary means of prevention is the control of vector ticks. Frequent inspection of the skin and hair for ticks is important, because it takes a minimum of 2-3 days of feeding for transmission of parasite to occur. No vaccines are currently available against babesiosis in dogs.

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As per PCA act 59,Clause (d) of section 11(1) keeping a dog tied with an unreasonably short or long chain or cord, keeping habitually chained up, abandoning it knowing that it will be exposed to starvation is an offence.

