



animals



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Infectious Diseases in Animals: Community Ecology and Pathogen Dynamics

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Message from the Guest Editor

Since the beginning of time, animal pathogens have circulated worldwide, with many causing severe disease and death. Many of these diseases are known to be transmitted between animal species and between animals and humans, of which smallpox is a good example, having evolved from pathogens circulating in wildlife. Ecological changes can drive evolution and change the complex interplay between hosts–environment–pathogens, ultimately favoring transmission. A good example can be seen in the El Niño events of the 1990s that led to the emergence of human hantavirus cases in the US through an ecological cascade. Increased precipitation led to a growth in vegetation, which sustained increased populations of rodents, facilitating hantavirus transmission between rodents and from rodents to humans. These ecological changes can apply to the dynamics of pathogens within individual hosts, where pathogens evolve in a complex interaction with other microbes within a host.



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Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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