

# AN "ENDEMIC" OF ALLERGY TO PIGEON TICKS (*Argas reflexus*) AFTER REMOVAL OF DOVECOTES



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## BACKGROUND

- Pigeon ticks: ectoparasites that feed on birds.
- If devoid of their natural host, they attack humans.
- While feeding, the ticks may cause allergy.

## PROLOGUE

- Dovecotes were removed from attics of some houses.
- Afterwards, 9 resident of the houses experienced allergic problems.
- They associated their problems with appearance of some "bugs".
- Acarology examination: the "bug" is *Argas reflexus*.

## QUESTION:

Was *Argas reflexus* (pigeon tick) the real culprit?



## STUDY POPULATION

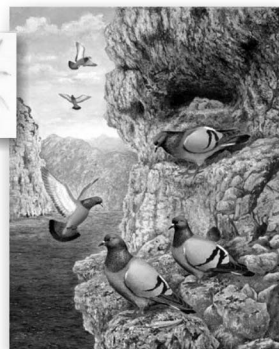
- 9 residents complaining of the "bug" allergy.
- 6 symptom-free residents of the same houses.

## INVESTIGATION

- Questionnaire and medical examination.
- Skin prick tests and sIgE-determination (UniCAP).
- Allergen: extracts of ticks collected on-site.

## RESULTS

- In 2 of 9 symptomatic persons, causes other than ticks were identified.
- Results for remaining 7 patients and 6 controls are shown in the Table.



Photographs: Prof. Daniel Haag-Wackernagel

Table. Tick-related symptoms and allergy test results.

Group	Symptomatic	Controls
Number of persons	7	6
Skin symptoms	7	0
Asthma and rhinitis	1	0
Positive SPT with <i>Argas reflexus</i>	6	1
Detectable sIgE against <i>Argas reflexus</i>	3	0



## CONCLUSION

The differences between both groups support the causal role of *Argas reflexus* in the health complaints.

## COMMENT

Pigeon ticks are capable of attacking and sensitising people.  
This may happen if removal of dovecotes is not followed by proper eradication of the ticks.

More information at:

[www.RadoslawSpiewak.net](http://www.RadoslawSpiewak.net)

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