

Patrón de alimentación de mosquitos (Diptera: Culicidae) transmisores del virus del Oeste del Nilo, recolectados sobre caballos y humanos en el norte de México

Feeding pattern of mosquitoes (Diptera: Culicidae) transmitters of the West Nile virus collected from horses and humans in northern Mexico

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Abstract

The nightly feeding pattern of mosquitoes, associated to viral transmission dynamics in domestic and wild animals in northern Mexico is still unknown. The aim of this study was to determine such pattern using lured traps with horse and humans in an agricultural farm located in the metropolitan area of Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico. In this area equines and several avian species, positive to west Nile virus, have been detected. Mosquito collection was done for ten consecutive days since 18:00 to 6:00 h the following day in June and July 2002. A total of 9 196 mosquitoes of 13 species were collected. The six most common species were: *Culex coronator*, *Cx. quinquefasciatus*, *Aedes vexans*, *Cx. tarsalis*, *Ochlerotatus sollicitans* and *Oc. taeniorhynchus*. The feeding pattern of these mosquitoes, collected on horse and human, was characterized by a peak of dawn activity and another one during midnight. Findings suggest that the most common species, which feed during evening-night, might be involved in arbovirus transmission amongst domestic and wild animals and, eventually, may pass the infection to humans.

Key words: MOSQUITO, FEEDING PATTERN, EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS, WEST NILE VIRUS.

Resumen

El patrón nocturno de alimentación de mosquitos asociado con la dinámica de transmisión de virus en animales domésticos y silvestres en el norte de México no se conoce. El objetivo de este estudio fue determinar dicho patrón con el uso de trampa cebada con caballo y humano, en una granja agrícola del área metropolitana de Monterrey, Nuevo León, México, donde ya se detectaron equinos y diversas especies de aves positivas al virus del Oeste del Nilo. La recolección de mosquitos se efectuó durante diez días sucesivos, a partir de las 18:00 h y finalizando a las 06:00 h del día siguiente en junio y julio de 2002. Se recolectaron 9 196 mosquitos de 13 especies. Las seis especies de mosquitos más abundantes fueron: *Culex coronator*, *Cx. quinquefasciatus*, *Aedes vexans*, *Cx. tarsalis*, *Ochlerotatus sollicitans* y *Oc. taeniorhynchus*. El patrón alimentario de estos mosquitos, recolectados en caballo y humano, se caracterizó por un pico de actividad crepuscular y otro de media noche. Los hallazgos sugieren que las especies de mosquitos más abundantes, que se alimentan durante la tarde-noche, pudieran estar involucradas en la transmisión de arbovirus en animales domésticos y silvestres y, eventualmente, pudieran pasar la infección a humanos.

Palabras clave: MOSQUITO, PATRÓN ALIMENTARIO, ENCEFALITIS EQUINA, VIRUS DEL OESTE DEL NILO.

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Introduction

There is a lack of information about the composition and abundance of mosquito species in the state of Nuevo Leon in northern Mexico. The determination of these entomological parameters is the first step for designing a program against mosquitoes that would prevent viral transmission. An example is the West Nile virus which represents a threat to public and animal health in northern Mexico. In spite of this, there are few studies on mosquitoes, both in field and laboratory conditions, in this area. The general bionomics and feeding pattern of these species are barely known. Despite the existence of information about the biology, lists of species⁹ and classic publications about taxonomy^{10,11} on *Toxorhynchites theobaldi*,^{1,2} *Anopheles pseudopunctipennis*,³ *Aedes aegypti*,⁴⁻⁸ these studies are insufficient to northern Mexico.

Since mosquitoes might transmit arbovirus to wild and domestic animals and humans, the study of the biology of these species is quite relevant. In the states of Nuevo León and Coahuila, Mexico, equines^{12,13} and several avian species form the state of Tamaulipas,¹⁴ positive to West Nile virus have been found. A study on the epidemics of Venezuelan equine encephalitis during 1960's reports that mosquitoes from northern México and Texas, U.S.A., were responsible for the arbovirus transmission in equines, wild animals and humans.¹⁵ Mosquitoes spread during the rainy season, when larval breeding sites are formed in farms where there are also poultry, bovines and equines. Because of the lack of information about this problem, the present study reports the composition and abundance, as well as the feeding pattern of mosquito species collected at an agricultural farm in the urban area in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, México.

Material and methods

The entomological sampling was done at an agricultural farm in the metropolitan area of Monterrey. The farm is located at 25°48' north latitude; 100°18' west longitude, in the Salinas Victoria Municipality, in the state of Nuevo Leon, Mexico. In this place, small ponds are formed due to overflow of residual and waste waters from irrigation channels in the summer. These ponds are mosquito larval breeding sites. The farm is in a semi-arid area with a mean annual pluvial precipitation of 537 mm, mean annual temperature of 22.1°C and two rainy seasons, one in May and the other in October.¹⁶ In this farm there are two agricultural cycles, wheat sowing and harvesting in the winter-spring cycle and corn and sorghum in the summer-fall cycle. The natural vegetation is composed by large quantities of weeds at the shores of the

Introducción

Poco se sabe acerca de la composición y abundancia de especies de mosquitos en ciudades de Nuevo León, al norte de México. La determinación de estos parámetros entomológicos constituye el primer paso en el diseño de un programa de lucha antimosquitos, que pudiera prevenir la transmisión, por ejemplo, del virus del Oeste del Nilo, que representa una amenaza en salud pública y pecuaria en el norte de México. Existen, sin embargo, muy pocos estudios bajo condiciones de campo y de laboratorio sobre mosquitos en esa región, por lo que casi no se conoce su bionomía en general ni su patrón de alimentación en particular. Aunque existe información sobre la biología del mosquito *Toxorhynchites theobaldi*,^{1,2} *Anopheles pseudopunctipennis*,³ *Aedes aegypti*,⁴⁻⁸ listas de especies de mosquitos⁹ y publicaciones clásicas sobre taxonomía de mosquitos,^{10,11} ese tipo de estudios efectuados en el norte de México resultan insuficientes.

El estudio de la biología de las especies de mosquitos más abundantes en el norte de México es de relevancia debido a que éstos pudieran ser los transmisores de arbovirus en animales silvestres, domésticos y humanos. Por ejemplo, en Nuevo León y Coahuila, ambos en México, se han encontrado equinos positivos al virus del Oeste del Nilo,^{12,13} así como en diversas especies de aves silvestres de Tamaulipas, México.¹⁴ Un estudio sobre la epidemia de la encefalitis equina venezolana durante la década de 1960 refiere que mosquitos del norte de México y de Texas, Estados Unidos de América, fueron responsables de la transmisión de arbovirus en equinos, animales silvestres y humanos.¹⁵ Los mosquitos proliferan durante la estación de lluvia, cuando se forman criaderos larvarios en granjas agrícolas, donde también se crían aves de corral, ganado vacuno y equino. Dada la escasez de información respecto de dicho problema, en este estudio se informa la composición y abundancia de especies de mosquitos recolectados en una granja agrícola del área urbana de Monterrey, Nuevo León, México, así como el patrón nocturno de alimentación de dichos insectos.

Material y métodos

El muestreo entomológico se efectuó en una granja agrícola del área metropolitana de Monterrey. El sitio de estudio (la granja agrícola: 25°48' NL; 100°18' WL) está en la comunidad de San Nicolás, municipio de Salinas Victoria, en Nuevo León. Ahí se forman arroyuelos debido al desborde de agua residual y de desecho de los canales de riego durante el verano, aquéllos se constituyen como criaderos de las larvas de los mosquitos. La granja está en un área semiárida con preci-

irrigation channels, such as Johnson grass, *Helianthus annuus*, *Ricinus communis*, tree and shrub species as *Prosopis* sp., *Acacia* sp., *Cordia boissieri* and *Euphorbia* sp. Wild birds of the corvid and passerines groups and rodents such as mice and rabbits are found around in riparian and mixed habitats. Bovines and equines are also bred along with domestic animals (dogs, cats and poultry).

The entomological sampling was done since June 15th to July 23rd 2002. Daily collection of mosquitoes started at 18:00 h and ended at 06:00 h the following day. The nocturnal period represented the highest proportion of mosquitoes with hematophagous habits. Mosquito collection was done by two methods: human and horse bait. The second one consisted in a trap made of mesh $3 \times 3 \times 3$ m, which had a horse in the inside to attract mosquitoes, with a 30 cm entrance between the mesh and the ground to allow access to insects. The fed mosquitoes that descended through the mesh walls were caught every 30 minutes. The females were detected with a battery lantern and collected with a manual vacuum for mosquitoes. The insects were kept in 250 mL mesh boxes and transported daily to the lab for species determination, according to King *et al.*,¹⁰ Darsie and Ward¹¹ criterion. Mosquitoes were placed in a conventional freezer for ten minutes in order to kill them. After this, insects were set on paper triangles with entomological needles with labels indicating data about method, place and date of sample. The method with human bait was similar to the horse one.

This method consisted in a two people job who worked as mosquito bait and collector. Jobs were turned every half hour. The ethical and bio-safety norms suggested and approved by the corresponding committees of the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon, in San Nicolas de los Garza, were followed. These norms follow the ethical protocol of the Helsinki Declaration in 1975 (and reviewed in 1983) on scientific experiments with humans. After a wide explanation about the health risks involved in the research, both people asked to participate as volunteers for the study. Individuals of each species were donated to the Entomological Museum of the Medical Entomological Laboratory of the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon. The mean and standard error of the mean of the number of mosquitoes, per person and day, were assessed with a number of repetitions equal to ten days of collection. This was done in order to determine the nightly feeding pattern of the six most common species of mosquitoes.

Results

A total of 9 196 mosquitoes of 13 species were col-

lection annual average of 537 mm, temperature annual average of 22.1°C and two seasons of rain: one in May and another in October.¹⁶ In the agricultural farm there are two agricultural cycles, which include sowing and harvest of wheat in the winter-spring cycle and corn and sorghum in the summer-autumn. The natural vegetation is composed of weeds that are abundant on the banks of the irrigation canals, such as Johnson grass (*Helianthus annuus*, *Ricinus communis*), species of trees and shrubs such as *Prosopis* sp., *Acacia* sp., *Cordia boissieri* and *Euphorbia* sp. There are wild birds of the corvid and passerine groups; rodents, such as rats and rabbits, are found around in riparian and mixed habitats. Domestic animals (dogs, cats and poultry) are also bred.

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lected at the agricultural farm (Table 1). The six most common species represented almost 99% of the total sampling. These were: *Culex coronator*, *Cx. quinquefasciatus*, *Aedes vexans*, *Cx. tarsalis*, *Ochlerotatus sollicitans* and *Oc. taeniorhynchus*. The first two were more active and abundant than the other four species analyzed in the observation period (18:00 to 06:00 h of the following day). The most abundant species collected with the human and horse bait was *Cx. coronator* (almost 50% of the total). The six species of mosquitoes were more active at dawn at 19:00 h, although activity was also observed at midnight (Figures 1 and 2). The horse bait method attracted more mosquitoes of the *Cx. coronator*, *Cx. quinquefasciatus* and *Cx. tarsalis* species compared to the number of mosquitoes collected with the human bait method. However, in both kinds of traps similar numbers of *Ae. vexans*, *Oc. sollicitans* and *Oc. taeniorhynchus* mosquitoes were collected. Insects of the other six species were caught sporadically with any of the methods, reason why the number of mosquitoes collected with every trap were not compared.

tarios en este estudio, después de recibir una amplia explicación acerca de los riesgos respecto de su salud y su vida si participaban en el estudio. De cada especie de mosquito se seleccionaron ejemplares que fueron donados al Museo de Entomología del Laboratorio de Entomología Médica, de la Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León. Para determinar el patrón nocturno de alimentación de las seis especies de mosquitos más abundantes, recolectadas en este estudio, se calculó la media y el error estándar de la media del número de mosquitos por persona y por día, con un número de repeticiones igual a diez días de recolección.

Resultados

En la granja agrícola de este estudio se recolectaron 9 196 mosquitos de 13 especies (Cuadro 1). Las seis especies de mosquitos más abundantes, cuya recolección representó cerca de 99% de la muestra total, fueron *Culex coronator*, *Cx. quinquefasciatus*, *Aedes vexans*, *Cx. tarsalis*, *Ochlerotatus sollicitans* y *Oc. taeniorhynchus*. Los dos primeros fueron más activos y abundantes que

Cuadro 1
ESPECIES MÁS ABUNDANTES DE MOSQUITOS RECOLECTADAS, AGRUPADAS EN
ORDEN DESCENDENTE, EN TRAMPAS DE CEBO CON CABALLO Y DE CEBO
CON HUMANO EN UNA GRANJA AGRÍCOLA EN NUEVO LEÓN
MOST COMMON SPECIES COLLECTED, IN DECREASING ORDER, USING TRAPS
WITH HORSE AND HUMAN BAIT AT AN AGRICULTURAL FARM
IN NUEVO LEON, MEXICO

<i>Species</i>	<i>Distribution</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Culex coronator</i> Dyar & Knab	Neotropical	4 698	51
<i>Cx. quinquefasciatus</i> (Say)	Cosmotropical	2 985	32
<i>Aedes vexans</i> (Meigen)	Worldwide	586	6
<i>Cx. tarsalis</i> (Coquillett)	Nearctic	341	4
<i>Ochlerotatus sollicitans</i> (Walker)	Nearctic (and Caribbean)	271	3
<i>Oc. taeniorhynchus</i> (Wiedemann)	Neotropical	249	3
<i>Psorophora ciliata</i> (Fab.)	Neotropical	24	< 1
<i>Anopheles pseudopunctipennis</i> (Theo.)	Neotropical	19	< 1
<i>Oc. triseriatus</i> (Say)	Nearctic	8	< 1
<i>Culiseta inornata</i> (Williston)	Nearctic	7	< 1
<i>Ae. aegypti</i> (L.)	Cosmotropical	4	< 1
<i>Ae. dorsalis</i> (Meigen)	Palaearctic and Nearctic	2	< 1
<i>Cx. peus</i> Speiser	Neotropical	2	< 1
Total		9 196	100

Discussion

Information about composition and abundance of mosquito species, age structure and viral infection rate in nature, provide critical and opportune data, useful to entomological pursuit to prevent viral infection that causes diseases such as encephalitis and meningitis. In this study, the most common species was *Cx. coronator*. This is a complex of several species,¹⁷ which later were considered as a unique species. So, when referring to *Cx. coronator*, *sensu stricto*, it means the most typical mosquito species with nearctic distribution. This insect has records in the jungles of South America; it emerges with low density and its larvae are raised in clean or waste water.¹⁸ It has been reported that in Oaxaca, Mexico, this species emerges with low densities (1.9 % of a collection of 100,000 mosquitoes).¹⁹

In Brazil *Cx. coronator* females have been collected using the human bait method,²⁰ and larvae

las otras cuatro especies de mosquitos analizadas en el periodo de observación (18:00 a 06:00 h del día siguiente). La especie más abundante que se recolectó, con el método de cebo con humano y cebo con caballo, fue *Cx. coronator* (cerca del 50% del total). Las seis especies de mosquitos fueron más activas durante el anochecer, a las 19:00 h, aunque también se observó actividad durante la media noche (Figuras 1 y 2). En general, el método de cebo con caballo atrajo mayor número de mosquitos de la especie de *Cx. coronator*, *Cx. quinquefasciatus* y *Cx. tarsalis* si se compara con el número de mosquitos atrapados con el método de cebo con humano. Sin embargo, en ambos tipos de trampas se recolectaron, en número similar, mosquitos *Ae. vexans*, *Oc. sollicitans* y *Oc. taeniorhynchus*. Los insectos de las otras siete especies sólo se recolectaron de manera esporádica en cualquiera de los dos métodos con cebos, por lo que no se realizó ninguna comparación del número de mosquitos atrapados en cada trampa.

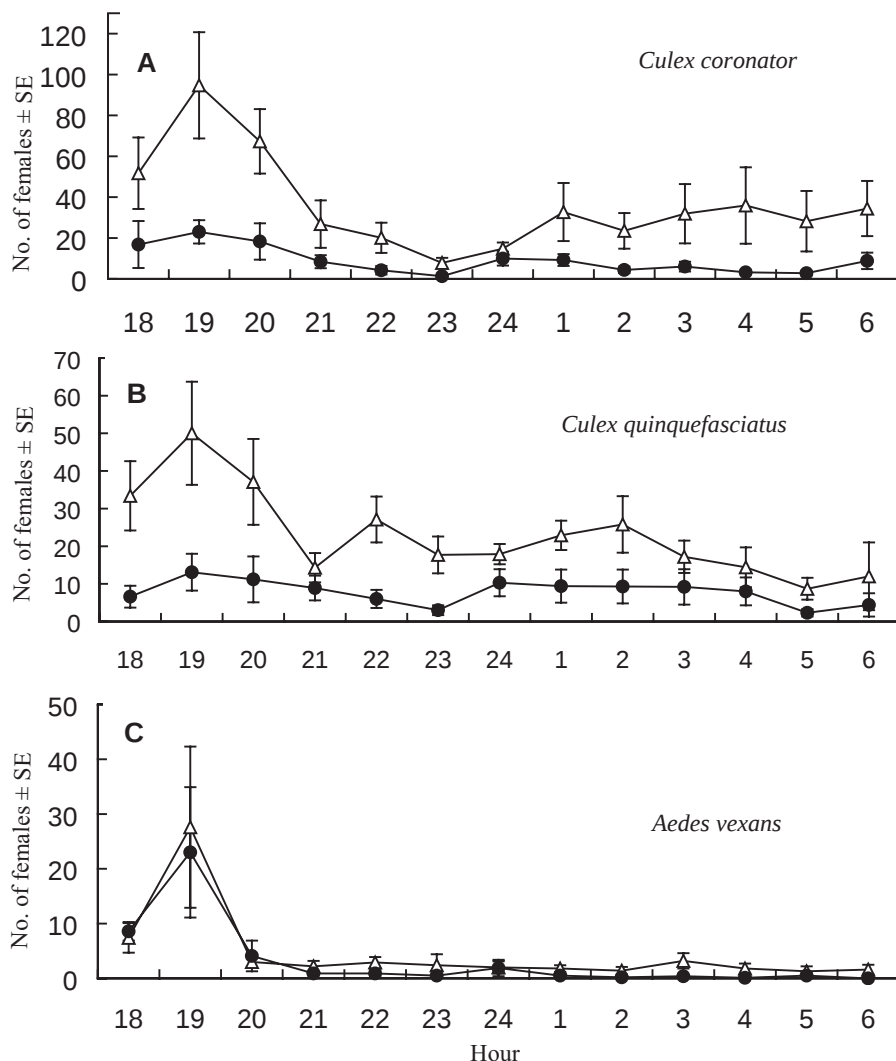


Figura 1: Patrón nocturno de alimentación de *Cx. coronator*, *Cx. quinquefasciatus* y *Ae. vexans* recolectados en trampa de cebo con caballo (Δ) y cebo con humano (•) en el norte de México. Cada punto representa la media $\pm$ el error estándar de la media (línea vertical) de diez días de recolección de las 19:00 a las 06:00 h del día siguiente.

Figure 1: Nightly feeding pattern of *Cx. coronator*, *Cx. quinquefasciatus* and *Ae. vexans* collected using traps with horse (Δ) and human (•) baits in northern Mexico. Each point represents mean $\pm$ standard error of the mean (vertical line) of ten days of collection since 19:00 to 06:00 h in the following day.

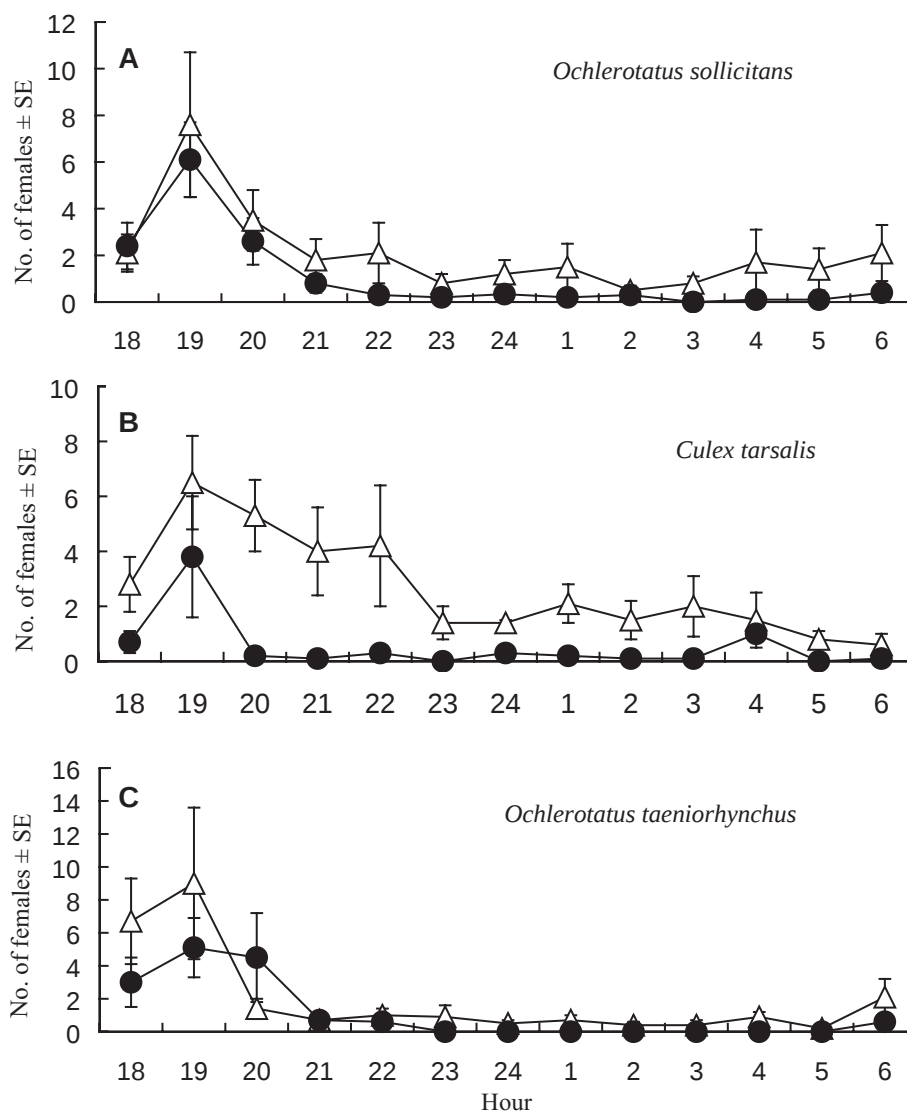


Figura 2: Patrón nocturno de alimentación de *Oc. sollicitans*, *Cx tarsalis* y *Oc. taeniorhynchus* recolectados en trampa de cebo con caballo (Δ) y cebo con humano (•) en el norte de México. Cada punto representa la media $\pm$ el error estándar de la media (línea vertical) de diez días de recolección de las 19:00 a las 06:00 h del día siguiente.

Figure 2: Nightly feeding pattern of *Oc. sollicitans*, *Cx tarsalis* and *Oc. taeniorhynchus* collected using traps with horse (Δ) and human (•) baits in northern Mexico. Each point represents mean $\pm$ standard error of the mean (vertical line) of ten days of collection since 19:00 to 06:00 h in the following day

have been found in rainy water deposited on *Aquascypha hydrophora*,²¹ as well as in small streams associated to dikes.²² The geographical distribution of *Cx. coronator* in northern Mexico, barely extends to the south of USA.¹¹ and this species remains above eight meters of altitude in jungle habitat.²³ The mosquitoes of this species, collected in the agricultural farm in Monterrey, are hungry females looking for a host; although *Cx. coronator* larvae might have been in waste water breeding sites created from the irrigation channels or around the farm. The localization and control of larval breeding sites of this abundant species in northern México, needs to be investigated since it could provide an estimate of the population density of adult mosquitoes, information necessary to eliminate mosquito larvae in the breeding sites.

The nightly feeding pattern of *Cx. coronator* was similar to the one recorded by Bertram²³ in a study on

Discusión

La información sobre composición y abundancia de especies de mosquitos, la estructura de edad y la tasa de infección viral en la naturaleza, ofrece datos críticos y oportunos que son útiles en un programa de seguimiento entomológico para prevenir infecciones virales que producen enfermedades como la encefalitis y la meningitis. En el muestreo entomológico realizado en este estudio, la especie más abundante fue *Cx. coronator*. Ésta es un complejo de especies,¹⁷ posteriormente se le consideró como especie única;¹¹ por tanto, al referirse a *Cx. Coronator*, *sensu stricto*, significa considerar la especie de mosquito típica con distribución neártica. Ese insecto se ha registrado en Sudamérica como de hábitat selvático, que surge a baja densidad y sus larvas se crían en agua limpia o de desecho.¹⁸ Se ha informado que en Oaxaca, México, esta especie

mosquitoes in Belize. The *Cx. coronator* species showed a nightly feeding pattern of the bi-modal type with the highest peak of activity at 19:00 h and a lower one at midnight.

Regarding the flying pattern of *Cx. tarsalis*, it is associated to host search activity, with a decrease after 23:00 h.²⁴ The feeding pattern observed for *Cx. tarsalis* agrees with the circadian activity recorded for this species. This activity starts at 21:00 h, with a peak between 22:00 and 23:00 h, when the first scotophase begins.²⁵

The five species of mosquitoes (*Cx. coronator*, *Cx. quinquefasciatus*, *Ae. vexans*, *Oc. sollicitans* and *Oc. taeniorhynchus*) found in the agricultural farm in this study are important vectors of arbovirus; they also cause encephalitis, encephalomyelitis and meningitis. The *Ochlerotatus* subgenus of *Aedes* acquired the status of genus.²⁶ The *Cx. coronator* species from Iquitos, Peru, was considered as a resistant carrier (refractory) to both strains of the Venezuelan equine encephalitis virus,²⁷ although in Brazil it was susceptible to infection with Saint Luis encephalitis virus.²⁸

The *Cx. quinquefasciatus*, *Ae. vexans*, *Oc. sollicitans* and *Oc. taeniorhynchus* species transmit the West Nile virus that was recently introduced to the United States.²⁹ The *Cx. quinquefasciatus* species is the carrier of the western equine encephalitis virus as well as the Saint Luis encephalitis in Texas.³⁰ Meanwhile *Ae. vexans* and *Oc. sollicitans* are the usual carriers of a pathogenic variant of the virus that causes Saint Luis encephalitis and several virus responsible for Jamestown Canyon disease and eastern and western equine encephalomyelitis in the United States.³¹ The *Oc. taeniorhynchus* and *Oc. sollicitans* species are vectors of the Venezuelan equine encephalitis virus classified as serious serotype;³² the first one is also responsible of the eastern and western equine encephalomyelitis transmission.²⁸ The dynamics of the transmission of the Venezuelan equine encephalitis virus in Central America changed to the enzootic to the epizootic type when *Oc. taeniorhynchus* and *Psorophora confinnis* infected mosquitoes, which fed from infected wild rodents and marsupials, spread the virus when feeding again from equines and humans.³³

In this article, the abundance and nightly feeding pattern of mosquitoes collected at an agricultural farm in northern México is reported. However, we did not study the natural infection rates of such species, which should be part of an entomological program for arbovirus detection. In relation to this, it is necessary to determine the natural infection rate with arbovirus in mosquitoes; this would back the entomological following program. The continuous control of mosquitoes during the period when the highest proportion of hungry females are seen looking for a

surge a muy bajas densidades (1.9% de una recolección de cerca de cien mil mosquitos).¹⁹

En Brasil se han recolectado hembras *Cx. coronator* usando el método de cebo con humano,²⁰ y las larvas se han hallado en agua de lluvia estancada en *Aquascypha hydrophora*²¹ y en arroyos asociados con la construcción de presas.²² La distribución geográfica del norte de México, de *Cx. Coronator*, sólo sobrepasa el sur de Estados Unidos¹¹ y esta especie de mosquito prevalece arriba de los ocho metros de altura en hábitat selvático.²³ Los mosquitos de dicha especie, recolectados en la granja agrícola de Monterrey, son hembras hambrientas en búsqueda de su huésped, aunque las larvas de *Cx. coronator* pudieran haber estado presentes en los criaderos con agua de desecho, que se forman de los canales de riego en o alrededor de la granja agrícola. La localización y control de los criaderos larvarios de esta abundante especie de mosquito en el norte de México requiere ser investigada, ya que puede proveer un estimado de la densidad poblacional de mosquitos en fase adulta y proporcionar información necesaria para eliminar las larvas de este mosquito en el criadero.

El patrón nocturno de alimentación para *Cx. coronator* fue similar al que registra Bertram²³ en su estudio de mosquitos de Belice. La especie *Cx. coronator* presentó un patrón nocturno de alimentación del tipo bimodal con el pico de actividad más alto a las 19:00 h y uno menor a la media noche.

Respecto del patrón de vuelo de *Cx. tarsalis*, éste se asocia con la actividad de búsqueda del huésped; ésta disminuye después de las 23:00 h.²⁴ El patrón de alimentación observado en *Cx. tarsalis* coincide con la actividad de vuelo circadiana registrada para esta especie, la cual inicia a las 21:00 h, con pico entre las 22:00 h y 23:00 h, cuando empieza la primera escotofase.²⁵

Las cinco especies de mosquitos (*Cx. Coronator*, *Cx. quinquefasciatus*, *Ae. vexans*, *Oc. sollicitans* y *Oc. Taeniorhynchus*) que se encontraron en la granja agrícola en este estudio son transmisores importantes de varios arbovirus, también causan encefalitis, encefalomyelitis y meningitis. El subgénero *Ochlerotatus* de *Aedes* adquirió el estatus de género.²⁶ La especie *Cx. coronator* de Iquitos, Perú, fue considerada como portador resistente (refractario) a ambas razas del virus de la encefalitis equina venezolana,²⁷ aunque en Brasil el mosquito fue susceptible a infección con el virus de la encefalitis de San Luis.²⁸

Las especies *Cx. quinquefasciatus*, *Ae. vexans*, *Oc. sollicitans* y *Oc. taeniorhynchus* son transmisores del virus del Oeste del Nilo, que ha sido introducido en fecha reciente a Estados Unidos.²⁹ La especie *Cx. quinquefasciatus* es el portador del virus de la encefalomyelitis equina del oeste, así como la encefalitis de San Luis,

host, is quite important in the detection of mosquitoes infected with West Nile virus. This virus seems to spread towards southern United States and there is indirect evidence of the virus transmission among several avian and equine species in northern Mexico.¹²⁻¹⁴ However, direct evidence about the viral circulation in mosquito populations has to be determined in northern México.

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en Texas,³⁰ mientras que *Ae. vexans* y *Oc. sollicitans* son los portadores habituales de una variante patogénica del virus que produce la encefalitis de San Luis y de varios virus que provocan la enfermedad de Jamestown Canyon y la encefalomiелitis equina del oeste y del este en Estados Unidos.³¹ Las especies *Oc. taeniorhynchus* y *Oc. sollicitans* son vectores del virus, clasificado como serotipo severo, de la encefalitis equina venezolana;³² la primera también es responsable de transmitir el virus de la encefalomiелitis equina del oeste y del este.²⁸ En Centroamérica la dinámica de transmisión de los virus que causan la encefalitis equina venezolana cambió del tipo persistente enzoótico a uno del tipo epizootico cuando los mosquitos infecciosos de *Oc. taeniorhynchus* y *Psorophora confinnis* que se alimentaron de roedores y marsupiales silvestres infectados, diseminaban el virus al alimentarse nuevamente en equinos y humanos.³³

En este artículo se comunica la composición, abundancia y patrón nocturno de alimentación de mosquitos recolectados en una granja agrícola en el norte de México, pero no se estudian las tasas de infección natural de dichas especies, lo cual debiera formar parte de un programa entomológico de detección de arbovirus. En este sentido, es necesario determinar la tasa de infección natural con arbovirus en mosquitos, ello reforzaría el programa de seguimiento entomológico. El control sostenido de mosquitos durante el periodo en que se presenta la proporción más alta de hembras hambrientas en búsqueda de huésped es de importancia en la detección de mosquitos portadores del virus del Oeste del Nilo. Éste parece extenderse hacia el sur de Estados Unidos y ya hay evidencia indirecta de la transmisión del virus entre diversas especies de aves y equinos en el norte de México;¹²⁻¹⁴ sin embargo, falta determinar la evidencia directa de circulación del virus en las poblaciones de mosquitos en el norte de México.

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