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***Mycobacterium bovis* Infection in Free-Ranging African Elephants**

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Mycobacterium bovis infection in wildlife species occurs worldwide. However, few cases of *M. bovis* infection in captive elephants have been reported. We describe 2 incidental cases of bovine tuberculosis in free-ranging African elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) from a tuberculosis-endemic national park in South Africa and the epidemiologic implications of these infections.

Tuberculosis (TB), caused by the human pathogen *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, is a recognized disease in human-managed and wild Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*) and African elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) (1–3). Previous findings demonstrate the importance of human-elephant interfaces for transmission. However, range countries for African and Asian elephants also have high burdens of bovine TB, caused by *M. bovis*. The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) records cases of bovine TB; in the 49 elephant range countries in Africa and Asia, only Namibia is declared free of *M. bovis* (4). Therefore, the paucity of cases of *M. bovis* infection in elephants is unexpected. The lack of *M. bovis* cases in elephants may be caused by rare or sporadic exposure, innate resistance of the species, or limited surveillance, especially in environments to which bovine TB is endemic.

Kruger National Park (KNP) in South Africa has recorded *M. bovis* infection in >20 wildlife species and is considered a bovine TB–endemic area. Although cases of *M. bovis* infection have been reported in other large herbivores, such as black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*) and white rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*) (5,6), only 1 case of *M. tuberculosis* infection has been found in an elephant in KNP (3), despite hundreds of individual animals examined during 1967–1994 when elephants were harvested (7). After the discovery of an *M. tuberculosis*–infected adult bull elephant in 2016 (3), opportunistic sampling of elephants was implemented by park veterinarians.

In May 2018, a young bull elephant (E1; estimated age 18–20 years) was fatally shot in the southern part of KNP. In addition, a young bull elephant (E2; estimated age 3 years) in KNP was euthanized in October 2019 after being found moribund. Postmortem examination of E1 revealed rare small, consolidated masses in the lung. Elephant 2 had several focal firm masses (1–2 cm²) scattered in the lung containing caseous material and some mineralization. We took representative samples from the peripheral (prescapular, inguinal, popliteal), head (parotid, retropharyngeal), thoracic (tracheobronchial), and abdominal (mesenteric) lymph nodes; lung lesions were also sampled. We froze samples at –20°C and

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