Since the 1970s, the population density and the infection rate of crayfish and freshwater crabs with metacercariae of Paragonimus westermani have decreased drastically and continuously in many endemic areas. However, paragonimiasis patients still appear in Korea, and the major source of infection is presumed eating soybean sauced freshwater crabs (Kejang). Infection status of freshwater crab and crayfish with metacercariae of Paragonimus westermani is an important epidemiological index which represents the status of human infection sources [1-3]. It is required to estimate the importance of freshwater crabs as an infection source of human paragonimiasis in Korea to manage the disease.

In order to estimate the current status of Paragonimus westermani transmission by the crabs or crayfish in Korea, we examined the intermediate hosts for the metacercariae from October 2007 to October 2008 using the crush method. All of the freshwater crabs, Eriocheir japonicus, were negative for P. westermani metacercariae while 10 (32.3%) of the 31 examined crayfish were positive. The 10 positive crayfish were caught in Haenam, Jeollanam-do, and there were 8-59 (mean 28.4) metacercariae per infected crayfish. These results suggest that P. westermani metacerariae are still transmitted by crayfish enzootically in southern Korea, and that freshwater crabs may transmit metacercariae only on rare occasions.

Key words: Paragonimus westermani, metacercariae, freshwater crab, crayfish

In conclusion, P. westermani metacercariae are still transmitted by crayfish enzootically in southern Korea, and freshwater crabs may transmit the metacercariae on rare occasions.
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