

MISCELLANEOUS

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WHERE'S THE HISTO?

HISTOPLASMOSIS IN CHILLAGOE CAVES AREA, NORTH QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

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ABSTRACT

*Ideal climatic and ecological conditions in many caves in the Chillagoe area suggest the existence of *Histoplasma capsulatum*. A study in progress proposes to identify those caves that may be reservoirs for the organism, subsequently presenting a potential health risk for cave visitors. Soil samples collected from caves containing bat and bird (swiftlet) populations are being processed by the Division of Mycotic Diseases, at the Center for Disease Control, Atlanta, Georgia. Preliminary results from 15 caves have been negative, though a more precise technique will be utilised in further collections. Histoplasmin (intra-dermal) skin testing of cavers intends to identify the possibility of cave exploration as one source of *Histoplasma capsulatum* exposure.*

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