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1: Vet Immunol Immunopathol 1998 Oct 23;65(2-4):259-[Related Articles, Links](#)
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Genetic characterization of canine distemper virus in Serengeti carnivores.

Carpenter MA, Appel MJ, Roelke-Parker ME, Munson L, Hofer H, East M, O'Brien SJ.

SAIC Frederick-National Cancer Institute, MD 21702-1201, USA.

The lion (*Panthera leo*) population in the Serengeti ecosystem was recently afflicted by a fatal epidemic involving neurological disease, encephalitis and pneumonia. The cause was identified as canine distemper virus (CDV).

Several other species in the Serengeti were also affected. This report presents CDV H and P gene sequences isolated from Serengeti lions (*Panthera leo*), spotted hyenas (*Crocuta crocuta*), bat-eared fox (*Otocyon megalotis*) and domestic dog (*Canis familiaris*). Sequence analyses demonstrated that the four Serengeti species carry closely related CDV isolates which are genetically distinct from other CDV isolates from various species and locations. The results are consistent with the conclusions that: (1) a particularly virulent strain of CDV emerged among Serengeti carnivores within the last few years; (2) that strain has recognizable shared-derived (synapomorphic) genetic differences in both H and P genes when compared to CDV from other parts of the world; and (3) that the CDV strain has frequently crossed host species among Serengeti carnivores.

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