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Letter to the Editor

Response to "Comment on Epidemiological Study of *Toxocara* Eggs in the Soil of Public Parks in Iran with an Emphasis on Climatic and Seasonal Diversity"

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Dear Editor-in-Chief

We would like to thank the author of the Letter to the Editor for the interest shown in our published article (1) and for the constructive comments provided.

As stated in the objectives of the study, the primary aim was to conduct a nationwide, large-scale environmental and epidemiological assessment of *Toxocara* egg contamination in public parks across Iran's major climatic zones and throughout all four seasons (1). The study was designed to evaluate spatial and seasonal patterns rather than to perform species-level differentiation.

Regarding the absence of molecular methods, we acknowledge that molecular techniques can accurately differentiate *T. canis* and *T. cati*. However, given the extensive number of soil samples analyzed (n=1,445), the study was intentionally conducted using standard parasitological identification techniques, including sucrose flotation and light microscopy, which are widely accepted and commonly applied in large-scale environmental surveys of soil contamination (1). Due to feasibility and logistical limitations associated with the large sample volume, molecular analysis was beyond the scope of the present study. This limitation

has been clearly acknowledged in the manuscript, and molecular approaches have been recommended for future investigations.

With respect to environmental and seasonal determinants, climatic zones and seasonal variations were included in the analysis (1). We agree that additional factors such as soil characteristics, park sanitation status, density of stray or owned animals, and human or pet traffic may influence contamination levels, as discussed in the Letter. These variables represent important directions for future studies within a One Health framework.

In conclusion, we believe that this study provides the first nationwide, multi-climatic, and multi-seasonal data on *Toxocara* egg contamination in public parks in Iran (1) and contributes valuable information to the field of environmental parasitology and zoonotic disease prevention. We appreciate the opportunity to clarify these points and thank the journal for facilitating this scientific exchange.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Reference

1. Shahbakhsh M, Akhzari S. Epidemiological Study of *Toxocara* Eggs in the Soil of Public Parks in Iran with an Emphasis on Climatic and Seasonal Diversity. Iran J Parasitol. 2025; 20(4):510-6.