DIDYMOZOIDAE TREMATODE PARASITES OF FLOUNDER *XYSTREURYS RASILIS* (JORDAN, 1891) COLLECTED IN THE STATE OF RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

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The species of the flounder *Xystreurys rasilis* (Jordan, 1891), occurs in the western South Atlantic ocean from Cabo Frio, State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to the Patagonia, Argentine. Flounders are an appreciated category of fish and have a high commercial value, including the international market. Members of the family Didymozoidae Monticelli, 1888 are parasites almost exclusively of marine teleosts, mainly scombrids, and are only rarely found in freshwater fishes. The aims of this study were to identify the didymozoids trematodes that parasitize *X. rasilis* in Rio de Janeiro State, present their parasitic indices and sites of infection. For this study, 36 of *X*. *rasilis* were purchased from fish markets of the municipalities of Cabo Frio, Niterói, Rio de Janeiro and Angra dos Reis, Rio de Janeiro State, Brazil. The hosts were transported to the laboratory where they were measured, weighed and necropsied. Among the 36 analyzed specimens of flounders, six fishes were found parasitized by didymozoid larvae that was identify as Didymozoidae Neotorticaecum type and registered parasitic indices of prevalence of 16.6%, mean intensity of 2.5, mean abundance of 0.4 and range of infection of 1-6 parastes per fish. The intestine and abdominal musculature were the sites of infection. The massive presence of these helminths in the musculature causes disgust in consumers and devaluation of the fish. Previous studies have reported the presence of didymozoid eggs in human feces, but they were considered as mechanical passage and did not represent a zoonotic risk. There are records of this digenetic trematode larva in two other flounders species from the Brazilian coast, *Paralichthys isosceles* Jordan, 1890 and *Paralichthys patagonicus* Jordan, 1889. This is the first report of this trematode larva parsitizing *X. rasilis* and due to its repulsive appearance is an important indicator for establishing fish hygiene control.

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