

***Aedes cretinus*: Is it a threat to the Mediterranean Countries?**

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Records of the occurrence of *Aedes cretinus* in Macedonia and Crete date back to 1921, when Edwards (1921) referred to it as the "Mediterranean representative of *Aedes albopictus*". Its limited distribution and low population density did not provoke further investigation and there are very few published articles on this species, apart from those by Mattingly (1954) and Lane (1982).

In 1992, a small population of *Ae. cretinus* was detected in Kifissia, a suburb 15 km north of Athens, breeding in a small shady ground pool with thick vegetation. In the summer of 1997, a Greek correspondent in Italy, stated in the television news that *Ae. albopictus* could possibly exist in Greece. This fact, as well as the description and medical importance of *Ae. albopictus*, given on television and in the Press, raised the awareness among Greek people. Several people living in suburbs located 10, 15, and even up to 20 km north of Athens, brought specimens to our laboratory, complaining that these mosquitoes, with the characteristics of the "dangerous Asian mosquito" were biting during the day time, causing great annoyance. Examination of the specimens revealed that all were *Aedes cretinus* and none of them *Ae. albopictus*. This indicates that *Ae. cretinus* is becoming an increasing problem in northern Athens.

The remarkable resemblance of the two species and the fact that both belong to the same subgenus, *Stegomyia*, gave rise to our special interest in *Ae. cretinus*. We would greatly appreciate any information related to this species, its bionomics, distribution in other European countries and, particularly, its potential in disease transmission.

References

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