

LICE EGG MORPHOLOGY VERSES LICE TAXONOMY

A.K. Saxena, S.K. Singh, Smita Badola, & Sandeep Kumar

Department of Zoology, Govt. Raza, P.G. College, Rampur (U.P.) 244 901, India

Phthirapteran eggs are quite polymorphic and exhibit certain distinctive features in form of markings/sculpturing/ornamentation on various parts of eggshell (on or within chorionic shell). Many species exhibit presence of variously shaped processes/filaments on the main egg shell / opercular disc. On the other hand, adults of certain species lack well marked intergeneric differences and pose difficulties during taxonomic differentiation. Present studies were undertaken to find out whether the louse egg morphology can be used as a guide to lice taxonomy. The microtopography of eggs of thirty phthirapteran species parasitising avian hosts has been recorded by Scanning Electron Microscopic studies. The nature of microphytes and polar thread present on opercular disc, the eggshell architecture and nature of apophyses has been noted in detail. The structure of egg stigma has also been recorded in case of selected species. Studies indicate that markings present on the egg cases of avian lice can be used to resolve not only intergeneric but also sometimes interspecies differences