PYEMOTES VENTRICOSUS (STRAW ITCH MITE) ONTOGENY

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Fine and Scott (1963) document seven human cases of straw itch mite dermatitis caused by *Pyemotes ventricosus* Newport. The mites were parasitizing *Anobium punctatum* (common furniture beetle) boring in floor joists of houses. When larval beetles pupated and emerged as adults, the mites, deprived of their usual hosts, attacked people in the houses.

Figure 1. Gravid female showing morphological details.

The straw itch mite has a unique life history in that the mother gives birth to adult offspring.

Within the enlarged abdomen of the female, the large eggs hatch, and the young mites (about 91% females) develop to adulthood. The mother gives birth to 200-300 young during her lifetime. The males emerge first, assist in parturition of the females, and then copulate immediately with the females. After mating the females scatter in search of hosts (Goldberger and Schamberg 1909; Goldberger 1910). The adult females are parasitic upon insect larvae. When hosts die off or metamorphose to adults, or when a heavy infestation is contacted, humans may be attacked severely.

The figures show various stages in this life history as described in the captions.

The slides from which the photographs were made were prepared by Dr. Harry D. Pratt. The photomicrographs were made by John P. Gust, Jr.
Figure 2. New born male and mother.
Figure 3. Eggs and developed young inside abdomen of mother.
Figure 4. Detail from Fig. 3.
Scott: Pyemotes ventricosus (Straw Itch Mite) 95

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