To Differentiate *Taenia* Eggs

In the April 2012 issue of the *Journal of Clinical Microbiology*, Sandora and McAdam published an interesting photo quiz (3). The answer to the photo quiz states that a *Taenia* egg is responsible for the patient's problems. This suggests that no identification to the species level is possible.

Monica Cheesbrough reveals in her book *District Laboratory Practice in Tropical Countries* (1) that "if required the Ziehl-Neelsen staining technique (as used for AFB) can be used to differentiate *Taenia* eggs. The embryophore of *T. saginata* is acid fast (i.e., stains red) whereas that of *T. solium* is not acid fast."

I believe that this "forgotten" technique can add some value to the photo quiz. It is nice to realize that not only high-tech tools are necessary to make an accurate diagnosis. Diagnosis of infections demands skilled work, with direct examination of motility, Gram stain, catalase, and oxidase as keystones of the diagnosis. Some other old-fashioned techniques, such as the Ziehl-Neelsen stain, are also essential. Concerning this perspective, the authors correctly stress the importance of a direct examination (2).

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