



# **Neuroparasitology and Tropical Neurology: Chapter 20. Baylisascaris larva migrans (Handbook of Clinical Neurology)**

*Kevin R. Kazacos, Linda A. Jelicks, Herbert B. Tanowitz*

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Baylisascaris procyonis is a roundworm of the raccoon found primarily in North America but also known to occur in other parts of the world including South America, Europe, and Japan. Migration of the larvae of this parasite is recognized as a cause of clinical neural larva migrans (NLM) in humans, primarily children. It is manifested as meningoencephalitis associated with marked eosinophilia of the cerebrospinal fluid and peripheral blood. Diagnosis is made by recovering and identifying larvae in or from the tissues, epidemiological history, serology, and imaging of the central nervous system. Treatment is with albendazole and steroids, although the prognosis is generally poor. This parasite can also cause ocular larva migrans (OLM) which usually presents as diffuse unilateral subacute neuroretinitis (DUSN). The ocular diagnosis can be made by visualizing the larva in the eye and by serology. Intraocular larvae can be destroyed by photocoagulation although albendazole and steroids may also be used. However, once visual disturbance is established the prognosis for improved vision is poor. Related Baylisascaris species occur in skunks, badgers, and certain other carnivores, although most cases of NLM are caused by *B. procyonis*. Baylisascaris procyonis has also been found in kinkajous in the USA and South America and may also occur in related procyonids (coatis, olingos, etc.).

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