



The description of the externa of *Sacculina beauforti* and its effect on the hepatosomatic index of the orange mud crab *Scylla olivacea*

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Abstract:

Rhizocephalan parasites are parasitic crustaceans infecting other crustacean species. They inflict serious morphological, physiological and behavioral changes upon infection. The most notable feature of infected crabs is the development of an externa (female reproductive organ) on the outer layer of the host's abdomen. This study provides the first detailed description of the externa of *Sacculina beauforti* on the orange mud crab *Scylla olivacea*. In addition, the hepatosomatic index (HSI) between infected and non-infected individuals was compared. HSI was found to be significantly higher in infected individuals than non-infected individuals. The results of this study contribute towards the taxonomic characterisation of the sacculinid rhizocephalan and the impact of *S. beauforti* towards the immune response of its host.

Keywords: *Sacculina beauforti*, *Scylla olivacea*, Hepatosomatic