The human lung fluke Paragonimus westermani is widely distributed throughout the Orient and the Indian subcontinent. It is found in Japan, China, Micronesia, New Guinea, Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, India, and the Philippines. A number of cases in Southeast Asian refugees have been reported in the United States, particularly among the 60,000 immigrants in California’s San Joaquin valley.¹ P. westermani can also infect wild and domestic mammals, such as foxes, civets, tigers, leopards, panthers, mongooses, wolves, pigs, dogs, and cats.

A number of other species of Paragonimus having regional importance can infect humans: P. miyazakii in Japan, P. heterotremus in Southeast Asia, P. africanaus in Cameroon, P. uterobilateralis in Liberia and Nigeria, and P. mexicanus and P. ecuadoriensis in Latin America.² P. kelicoti, a lung fluke of mink and opossums in the United States, can also cause infection in humans.³

**Historical Information**

Kerbert in 1878 provided the morphologic description of the adult worm, which he recovered at an autopsy of a Bengal tiger. However, according to Leuckart, Nakahama had previously described an identical trematode, which he had found at an autopsy of a man.

The life cycle of P. westermani was largely worked out by Japanese parasitologists Nakagawa in 1916, who implicated the crab as the intermediate host in the transmission of P. westermani, and Yokagawa in 1915, who determined the correct route of migration of the immature adult fluke in the mammalian host. Most of the early descriptions of the clinical disease
**Paragonimus westermani**

- **Cercariae encyst in crab; become metacercariae**
- **Eggs pass in feces**
- **Metacercariae are ingested with raw or undercooked crab meat**
- **Melacercariae are ingested with raw or undercooked crab meal**
- **Nail infestations**
- **Adults live in lung cyst**
- **Worms hatch in small intestine**
- **Unembryonated eggs in lung**
- **Worms mature in lung**
- **Reservoir hosts**