Abstract
The main objective of this study was to investigate the role of wild rodents as Leptospira spp. reservoirs in a suburban area of Tandil city, Buenos Aires province (Argentina), where a person had died due to pulmonary leptospirosis. The specific objectives were: to estimate the rodent density near the patient’s home, to determine the serological prevalence and isolation of leptospirosis from wild rodents, and to identify the isolated strains. The area examined was a suburban neighbourhood in Tandil near the Languayú stream, where the patient’s house is located. Rattus norvegicus were trapped on the stream banks during two nights and a high capture rate (70%), was obtained. All rats (42) were examined serologically by the microscopic agglutination test (MAT), and 22 of them (52.3%) reacted with Leptospira serovars castellonis, canicola, grippotyphosa, icterohaemorrhagiae and hebdomadis at a titer of 1:50. The kidneys from 25 animals were cultured, and 24 isolates of L. interrogans (96%) were obtained. The isolated strains were identified as Icterohaemorrhagiae serogroup by MAT performed with rabbit hyperimmune reference sera. These findings showed a high density of suburban rodents highly infected with pathogenic leptospira, sharing environment in close contact with humans with evidence of leptospiral disease.

Keywords
Leptospirosis, R. norvegicus, transmission to humans.