

## HANTAVIRUS IN PERIDOMESTIC POPULATIONS OF DEER MICE IN WESTERN MONTANA<sup>TWS</sup>

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Deer mice (*Peromyscus maniculatus*) are the principal reservoir of the Sin Nombre virus (SNV) which causes hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS). Most human infections are believed to occur as a result of contact with deer mice and their excreta within human dwellings. Unfortunately little is known about the ecology of mice that inhabit buildings. We studied deer mouse populations at 2 study sites near Butte, Montana and 1 site near Cascade, Montana beginning in October 1996. Animals were trapped monthly in a variety of human structures including houses, barns, sheds, and granaries. At the same time populations outside of buildings were also trapped. Captured rodents were ear tagged and a blood sample taken prior to release. Blood samples were analyzed for the presence of antibody reactive with SNV. Prevalence of antibodies to SNV was higher in individuals that were captured only inside of buildings compared to those captured only outside of buildings. However the highest prevalence was found in individuals that were captured both inside and outside of buildings. Differences in survival and age and sex structure were also found between these 3 groups.