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A REVIEW ON THE HISTORY OF STUDIES ON THE MEDICALLY IMPORTANT SPIDERS (ARANEAE) OF IRAN

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Background: Spiders (Araneae) are the largest order of Arachnida, currently comprising more than 46820 accepted species with 112 families. With the exception of two small families (Uloboridae and Holarchaeidae), nearly all other spiders are venomous, but for several reasons, only a small fraction of them (roughly about 300 species) are considered as having medically important venoms. Most of these species belong to the genera *Atrax*, *Phoneutria*, *Loxosceles* and *Latrodectus*.

Material and methods: All records and data regarding the medically important spiders occurring in Iran were obtained from old and recent publication and a map of distribution was made.

Results and discussion: From these groups, eight species are known to occur in Iran: five belong to *Latrodectus* (*L. cinctus*, *L. dahli*, *L. geometricus*, *L. pallidus*, *L. tredecimmguttatus*) and three belong to *Loxosceles* (*L. persica*, *L. rufescens*, *Loxosceles* sp.).

Conclusions: In my presentation, I will give an overview of our current knowledge of Iranian spiders, and present detailed information on the history of studies, species composition, distribution, ecology and medical relevance of these medically important spider species in this country, with a main focus towards recent progresses.

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Keywords: Spiders, Iran, Medicaly important