



Recognition and treatment of chronic pain in geriatric horses

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In this lecture, the aim will be to discuss differences between acute and chronic pain. There is abundant literature on acute pain assessment in horses, but there are no validated pain scales for objective assessment of chronic pain in horses yet. In geriatric horses, chronic problems like arthrosis and laminitis are regularly diagnosed, possibly together with PPID. Both these chronic diseases can be accompanied by acute flairs of pain, making treatment sometimes difficult. At these chronic stages, neuropathic changes are also described, for instance in chronic laminitis (Jones et al., 2007). Therefore, multimodal treatment with analgesic drugs that have complementary modes of action than traditional NSAIDs and opioids, is indicated and will be discussed in this lecture.

Furthermore, research plans to assess chronic pain in horses will be discussed in this lecture as well. The use of composite and facial expression based pain scales will be discussed, based on preliminary studies that have been performed in donkeys with chronic pain.

References:

- Jones, E. et al. (2007). Neuropathic changes in equine laminitis pain. *Pain* 132, 321-331.
Driessen, B., Bauquier, S.H., Zarucco, L. (2010). Neuropathic Pain Management in Chronic Laminitis. *Veterinary Clinics of North America, Equine Species*. 26, 315-37.