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CASE SERIES OF HORSES WITH EXOTIC INFECTIONS OR MULTIPLE SIMULTANEOUS INFECTIONS WITH UNDERLYING PITUITARY PARS INTERMEDIA DYSFUNCTION

Introduction

Pituitary pars intermedia dysfunction (PPID) is a chronic, progressive disease of older horses. PPID horses are more prone to secondary infections due to immunosuppression. A single infection site involving the foot, the sinus, the teeth, or the skin is common. But indeed, these horses can harbor multiple, unrelated infections simultaneously, and infections in unusual locations, or even infections involving atypical pathogens.

Material and methods

A retrospective case series of animals admitted between 2015 and 2017 in the Equine clinic of Lyon was conducted.

This report describes a series of cases where animals presented with unusual infectious sites or organisms, or with multiple, seemingly unrelated infectious processes simultaneously, where an underlying PPID leading to immunosuppression of the animal was also identified.

Results

Over a 3 year period, out of 50 animals presenting with clinical PPID (diagnosed on basal ACTH blood levels, or with a TRH stimulation test), eleven (22%) of these showed multiple intercurrent, unrelated infectious processes (n=7), or atypical infections (n=4): an unusual pathogen was found in a pony exhibiting a fungal nasal mycetoma involving *Aspergillus terreus*. Bacterial infections in uncommon locations were found in several horses, including a cervical diskospondylitis and a septic arthritis of the temporo-mandibular joint.

Discussion

Multiple, unrelated infections can be present, and recognition of all sites of infection is crucial.

When a diagnosis is made of an unusual infectious organism or site, the animal should be examined for signs of associated PPID or other causes of immunosuppression, which could be responsible for their susceptibility to the infection.

Conclusion

In PPID aged horses, the possibility of multiple and unusual infections should be considered by veterinarians. Further studies into the prevalence and sites of infections, infectious agents involved in a population of PPID versus aged control horses or pergolide treated horses would be of interest.

References

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