



Clinical update: Anaplasma

John Pringle DVM, PhD diplomate ACVIM-LA

Professor equine medicine
Department of Clinical Sciences, Swedish University of
Agricultural Sciences- Sweden.
John.pringle@slu.se

The tick-borne bacterium *Anaplasma phagocytophilum* is an intracellular parasite that is an increasingly recognized cause of febrile disease in horses, cattle and sheep, as well as in man and even dogs. Initial infection in the horse appears as fever, accompanied over time with various other signs such as distal limb edema and ataxia (Fig 1). Treatment with tetracyclines provides rapid relief from clinical signs, but horses can also recover uneventfully without antibiotics (2). The signs of acute infection are not unique and can readily be misdiagnosed for a wide range of other infections (2). As well, it appears that infection without clinical disease is common in endemic areas (1). With the warming of the northern hemisphere this tick-borne disease is expected to alter its ecology, and spread even further north. This seminar will present a brief overview of the clinical appearance of horses with acute anaplasmosis, the latest diagnostic and treatment aspects and recent research on long-term persistence (3).

References:

1. Egenvall A et al. Cross-sectional study of the seroprevalence to *Borrelia burgdorferi sensu lato* and granulocytic Ehrlichia spp. and demographic, clinical and tick-exposure factors in Swedish horses. *Prev Vet Med.* 2001 May 1;49(3-4):191-208.
2. Franzén P. et al., Acute clinical, hematologic, serologic and polymerase chain reaction findings in horses experimentally infected with a European strain of *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*. *J Vet Internal Med* 2005; 19:232-239
3. Franzén et al. Molecular evidence for persistence of infection with *Anaplasma phagocytophilum* in the absence of clinical abnormalities in horses after recovery from acute experimental infection." *J Vet Intern Med* 2009; 23:636-642

Fig 1. Acute Anaplasma infection over time

