THE USE OF COLA FOR THE TREATMENT OF GASTRIC IMPACTIONS IN HORSES

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Background: Gastric impactions are an uncommon cause of colic in horses (Freeman 2011), although they appear to occur more often in Friesians. The administration of cola via nasogastric tube to (help) resolve impactions has been described (Banse et al. 2011; Rodriguez Hurtado et al. 2007), but the efficacy of this treatment has not been reported.

Objectives: To compare the success of treatment of gastric impactions with and without the use of cola and to determine whether Friesians are more often affected by gastric impactions than other breeds.

Methods: Patient records were retrieved (2003-2019) and 125 horses with gastric impactions identified. The outcome was compared between horses that were treated with cola and those that were not. The percentage of Friesians in the group of horses with gastric impactions was compared to that in the population admitted to our clinic and treatment success in Friesians was compared to that in other breeds.

Results: Overall 72/125 (57.6%) horses with gastric impactions were discharged from the hospital, but the likelihood of survival was significantly greater in horses treated with cola (48/58 = 82.8% vs. 24/67 = 35.8%, p < 0.001). Of the 125 horses with gastric impactions 38 (30.4%) were Friesians, a significantly higher percentage than in our hospital population (9.4%, p < 0.001). Also, Friesians treated with cola were less likely to survive (12/18 = 66.7%) than other breeds (36/40 = 90%, p = 0.03).

Conclusions: Gastric impactions in horses are more likely to be resolved when treatment includes the nasogastric administration of cola. Friesian horses are more likely to develop gastric impactions than other breeds and less likely to survive.

Ethical animal research: No ethical approval required.

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References