

## RHODOCOCCLUS EQUI IN TWO ADULT HORSES

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### Introduction

*Rhodococcus equi* infection is known to occur predominantly in young horses (1-6 months of age). Bronchopneumonia is the most common clinical sign of infection, but diarrhoea, septic arthritis, intra-abdominal abscessation and multifocal abscesses throughout

the body may also occur. The infection is rare in adult animals (1).

### Case reports

In a 5-year old Friesian mare and in a 14-year old Quarter horse stallion, *Rhodococcus equi* was cultured at post-mortem examination from multiple abscesses. The Friesian mare had been treated with prednisolone (1 mg/kg sid po) for 3 months for an exfoliative dermatosis and was referred with fever, poor body condition and increased respiratory effort. The Quarter horse stallion had shown intermittent coughing and nasal discharge

for five years and was referred because of decreased appetite, poor body condition, increased respiratory effort and an exfoliative dermatosis on the limbs, present since 2 weeks. It was treated with several drugs, including dexamethasone (0.04 mg/kg sid iv). Haematology and blood biochemistry of both horses showed an increased white blood cell count (31.1 G/l and 27.1 G/l respectively) and a low to normal total protein concentration (43 g/l and 63 g/l respectively). It was speculated that the exfoliative dermatitis and/or the use of corticosteroids led to decreased immunocompetence and the occurrence of an opportunistic *Rhodococcus equi* infection in these adult horses.

### Reference

1. Boswinkel M and Sloet van Oldruitenborgh-Oosterbaan MM. *Diagnosis and therapy of Rhodococcus equi infection in the horse. Tijdschr Diergeneesk 2006;131:602-11*