

ECB Spa Case Study 2:

Wound Injury - Hock



On 13/12/02 this mare was found to be lame in the left hind limb and soon developed a painful swelling at the back of the hock, originating by the chestnut. No wound was found, and despite vigorous antibiotic and anti-inflammatory therapy an area of cellulitis developed which rapidly became a large abscess.

Within three days, an area of skin measuring approximately 18cm x 12cm sloughed, exposing the superficial and deep digital flexor tendons. The abscess was also extending distally between the superficial and deep flexor tendons, making provision of adequate drainage very difficult. Despite her excellent temperament and the judicious use of pain relief and sedation, the mare was extremely sensitive to any handling or flushing of the abscess. At this point, euthanasia became a strong possibility, as there was deep concern that the infection would irreparably damage the flexor tendons, leading to collapse of the limb.

She was presented to The Centre on 19/12/02 (Fig 1.) where she was treated on a daily basis in the spa therapy unit. Bandaging was kept to a minimum and by 03/01/03 a large area of granulation tissue had developed (Fig 2.).

This was successfully trimmed back on two occasions. A single episode of wound infection arose, which was treated with a 5 day course of antibiotics. The wound measured 10cm x 5cm (11/02/03) and showed every sign of contracting and healing completely, without the need for skin grafting. She remained sound with no lower limb swelling.



Fig.1a



Fig.1b

19/12/02



Fig. 2

3/01/03

She was referred for spa therapy by Mike Daly MRCVS Woodlands Veterinary Clinic

"Her response to treatment was remarkable, as the discharge soon dried up and the pain rapidly subsided. Bandaging was kept to a minimum and by the 3rd January a large area of granulation had developed, which was easily controlled.

The case demonstrates the effectiveness of spa therapy, where more conventional treatments prove inadequate.

I would like to thank the mare and her owner for their stoicism throughout a very painful condition, the staff at the Natural Equine Therapy Centre for their dedicated care and Pet Plan Equine Insurance for their help and support throughout."