

PREVALENCE OF *Salmonella* SPP. SHEDDING IN HORSES WITH CLINICAL SIGNS OF COLIC AND HOSPITALIZED HORSES

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A major problem in detection and prevention of salmonellosis in horses are the subclinical carriers, which shed bacteria intermittently. The occurrence of subclinical shedding and development of clinical salmonellosis in horses depends on various predisposing factors such as transportation, overcrowding, sudden changes in diet, surgery, gastrointestinal disorders and antibiotic treatment.

The aim of this study was to estimate the prevalence of *Salmonella* spp. shedding in horses treated at the Faculty Clinic, and horses with clinical signs of colic treated in the field. Sixty samples of faeces were collected. Three samples were taken from each horse with 24 hours intervals. Samples were cultured using enrichment and selective media for the isolation of *Salmonella* spp. from faeces. Suspected colonies were further identified by conventional biochemical methods. All faecal samples examined in this study were negative for *Salmonella* spp. Based on these results it can be assumed that the prevalence of *Salmonella* spp. shedding in examined horses is low. However, due to low prevalence previously determined in several studies, it should be noted that this study may not have included enough horses to derive a conclusion about the real prevalence. Furthermore, the objective disadvantage of sample collection was the lack of five consecutive samples. Although five samples improve bacterial culture sensitivity, in clinical practice it was not feasible for all horses.

The conclusion is made that more horses need to be sampled to estimate the prevalence of *Salmonella* spp. faecal shedding. Furthermore, in spite of probable low prevalence, it is highly recommended to be aware of this fact and take samples when dealing with animals clinically suspected for salmonellosis, as well as those exposed to aforementioned risk factors, in order to prevent the possibility of direct and indirect transmission of *Salmonella* spp. to other animals and humans.