Successful Surgical Debridement of a Cerebral Streptococcus equi equi Abscess by Parietal Bone Flap Craniotomy of a 2-Month Old Warmblood Foal


1Department of Large Animal Internal Medicine, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Ghent University, Merelbeke, Belgium; 2Department of Surgery and Anaesthesiology of Domestic Animals, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Ghent University, Merelbeke, Belgium; 2Department of Veterinary Medical Imaging, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Ghent University, Merelbeke, Belgium

Brain abscesses and intracranial masses have been regularly described in horses. Treatment is often difficult and unrewarding resulting in high mortality rates. Surgical debridement and drainage of a cerebral abscess using parietal bone flap craniotomy has not been described in equine medicine. A 2-month old female Warmblood foal was presented with severe neurological signs of acute onset. Computed tomography (CT) revealed a 3x4x4cm cerebral mass in the left brain hemisphere with remarkable cerebral edema. Craniotomy, using a parietal bone flap technique, allowed the abscess to be sampled, drained and lavaged. Immediately post-surgery the foal showed remarkable clinical improvement. Sample culture confirmed Streptococcus equi equi infection. The foal was further medically treated for 6 weeks, leading to complete clinical and radiographical (CT) recovery. Intracranial surgery in equine medicine is limited. Using a parietal bone flap instead of partial craniectomy to gain access to the cerebrum is a less invasive procedure leading to better aesthetic results and should be considered to treat cerebral masses in the horse.