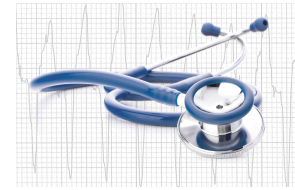


Exercise-associated arrhythmias in British Thoroughbred Racehorses.

A survey of prevalence and risk factors



Progress to date

Over the past 18 months, post-race ECG traces have been collected from 587 horses at 28 different race meetings selected at random and including National Hunt, Turf and All weather flat meetings. We identified 33 horses with premature complexes (5.6% prevalence), 3 with physiological rhythm abnormalities (0.5% prevalence) and 2 horses with atrial fibrillation (0.3% prevalence). None of these horses required treatment for their dysrhythmias. All of the data collected remains confidential and will be released at the request of the owner or trainer.

These prevalences are similar to those reported in Standardbred race horses. Currently we are in the process of analysing our data to look for specific risk factors for dysrhythmias. The project has allowed us to identify the optimal technique for using the smartphone ECG in this setting, advice which we have been able to share at a variety of veterinary meetings. The data forms a useful resource for vets working on racecourses and those advising trainers as they can compare results in individual horses with information from this study.

Acknowledgements

It is a testament to the British racing industry that key organisations support research within the sport. We are extremely thankful for the cooperation provided by every trainer. Their willingness to participate has made this study possible. At race meetings everyone is extremely busy and to allow us to record the ECG traces was greatly appreciated. We would especially like to thank all of the travelling staff and grooms; they were helpful and patient at all times.

Similarly, the Clerks of the courses have provided the project with wonderful support and their racecourse staff have been accepting of the project and incredibly obliging. We are extremely grateful for all the support and assistance.

We are indebted to the Association of Racecourse Veterinary Surgeons for its support of the project; ARVS members have been instrumental throughout the project design, promotion and data collection.

This project would not have been possible without the support and assistance of the National Trainers Federation and Racehorse Owners Association. These organisations informed and liaised with their members and provided opportunities to promote the study. Without this it would have been impossible to carry out the data collection.

The British Horseracing Association has been instrumental in all aspects of the project from project design, interaction with the racecourse owners through to stables access and assistance on race days. We would like to express our very great appreciation to their welfare officers and official veterinarians for their assistance.

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