
Carolyn E. Arnold, DVM, Diplomate ACVS; M. Keith Chaffin, DVM, MS, Diplomate ACVIM; and Noah D. Cohen, VMD, MPH, PhD, Diplomate ACVIM

Abdominal abscesses in adult horses are associated with a guarded prognosis for survival. Authors' address: Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences, College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843-4475; e-mail: carnold@cvm.tamu.edu. © 2010 AAEP.

1. Introduction
The objective of this study was to determine clinical signs, diagnostic methods, treatment, and outcome of a population of adult horses with abdominal abscesses. This was a retrospective study comprised of 61 adult horses with abdominal abscesses.

2. Materials and Methods
Medical records of adult horses with abdominal abscesses treated at Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (1993–2008) were reviewed. Information was recorded regarding signalment, history, clinical signs, diagnosis, treatment, and short- and long-term outcome. Risk factors for survival were determined.

3. Results
Sixty-one horses met criteria for inclusion. Clinical signs included colic (67%), fever (46%), anorexia (51%), depression (57%), and weight loss (30%). Diagnosis was based on abdominal ultrasound, exploratory celiotomy, rectal exam, and necropsy. Abscesses were variable in size, location, and number. Only 15 horses (24.6%) survived to discharge. Multiple bacterial isolates were identified from aspirates of abscesses and subsequent adhesion formation limited outcome. Risk factors for survival included age and heart rate at admission.

4. Discussion
Adult horses with abdominal abscesses often have severe adhesion formation. Multiple isolates are frequently identified from the abscess. Prognosis for survival is guarded to poor.

Acknowledgment
We thank Andrea Clark for her role in data collection and preparation of data for statistical analysis.