EQUINE LAMENESS

Laurie Gallatin DVM, DACVIM

COMMON CAUSES OF LAMENESS

• Subsolar Abscess
• Laminitis
• Caudal Heel Pain Syndrome
• DJD
• Soft Tissue Injuries
• Muscle Disorders
• Neurologic Disorders
• Fractures
GRADING A LAMENESS

- GRADE 1- MILD, NOT APPARENT AT THE WALK, NOT CONSISTENT
- GRADE 2- MODERATE, APPARENT AT THE TROT
- GRADE 3- SEVERE, APPARENT AT ANY GAIT
- GRADE 4- TOE-TOUCHING LAME, HOPPING OVER THE LIMB
- GRADE 5- NON-WEIGHT BEARING

HISTORY

- SIGNALMENT
- DURATION
- AFFECTED LIMB
- ACTIVITY
- TRAUMA
- SHOEING
  - RECENT RESET
  - ABNORMAL WEAR
  - CHANGES IN ANGLE, BALANCE, ETC
  - TRAINING SURFACE
- MEDICATIONS
- PREVIOUS LAMENESS
- REST/WORK
- ATTITUDE CHANGE
BASIC STANDING LAMENESS EXAMINATION

• NOTE CONFORMATION
• STANCE
• BALANCE
• SYMMETRY
• PALPATE
  • HEAT
  • SWELLING
  • PAIN
• DIGITAL PULSES
• HOOF TESTERS

BASIC LAMENESS EXAMINATION

• WALK
• TROT
• CIRCLE
• UNDER TACK
• HARD SURFACE
• SOFT SURFACE
• FLEXION TESTS
BASIC LAMENESS EXAMINATION

• F/H WEIGHT LOAD IS APPROXIMATELY 60/40
• TROT IS THE GAIT OF CHOICE FOR LAMENESS EVALUATION
• FORELIMB LAMENESS MORE COMMON THAN HINDLIMB
• IN THE FORELIMB, 95% OF LAMENESS BELOW THE KNEE
• SUSPECT FOOT FIRST
• 90% OF LAMENESS IS IN THE FOOT!

BASIC LAMENESS EXAMINATION

• FORELIMB LAMENESS
  • “DOWN ON SOUND”

• HINDLIMB LAMENESS
  • HEAD GOES DOWN WHEN LAME LEG IS WEIGHT BEARING
  • HIP HIKE ON LAME LEG
  • “HOPPING OFF LAME LEG”
LAMENESS EXAMINATION

• FLEXION TESTS
• NERVE BLOCKS
• RADIOGRAPHS
• ULTRASOUND
• ADVANCED DIAGNOSTICS

TREATING THE LAME HORSE

• PROPER DIAGNOSIS
  • HOOF ABSCESS VS FX
• STALL REST
• LIMITED/GRADUATED EXERCISE PROGRAM
• ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES
• JOINT INJECTIONS
• CORRECTIVE SHOEING
• SURGERY
• CAREER CHANGE
• ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY
  • STEM CELL
  • PRP
**SUBSOLAR ABSCESSATION**

- Hoof Abscess
- Most common cause of acute lameness
- Par out
- Soak/pack
- Anti-inflammatories
- Booster tetanus vaccination

**LAMINITIS**

- Founder
- Multiple causes
- Multiple treatments
- Usually bilateral
- Emergency
- Anti-inflammatories
- Pain management
- Frog support
- Corrective trimming/shoeing
- Can be career and life-ending
CAUDAL HEEL PAIN SYNDROME

• NAVICULAR DISEASE
• TYPICALLY QH
• BILATERAL FRONT LIMB
• CORRECTIVE SHOEING WITH WEDGE PADS
• ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES
• OTHER MEDICATIONS
DEGENERATIVE JOINT DISEASE

- ARTHRITIS
- JOINT INJECTIONS
- ORAL ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES
- TOPICAL ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES
- GLUCOSAMINE SUPPLEMENTS
- CAREER CHANGE

SOFT TISSUE INJURIES

- STRAINS/SPRAINS
- TENDONS
- LIGAMENTS
- JOINT CAPSULES
- MUSCLES
- SOME CAN BE CATASTROPHIC
DISORDERS OF THE MUSCULAR SYSTEM

- HYPP
- PSSM
- TYING-UP
- GENETIC, ETC
- USUALLY INVOLVE
  MANAGEMENT CHANGES
  - TURN OUT
  - DIET
  - EXERCISE
  - CAREER CHANGE

NEUROLOGIC DISEASES

- EASILY CONFUSED WITH LAMENESS
- EPM
- WOBBLER
- USUALLY DO NOT IMPROVE WITH TIME,
  STALL REST, OR ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES
- DANGEROUS TO RIDE
FRACTURES

• ALWAYS AN EMERGENCY

• DO NOT MOVE HORSE UNTIL FRACTURE IS STABILIZED!

• POSSIBLE REPAIR DEPENDS ON BONE, CONFORMATION OF BREAK, OPEN/CLOSED, ETC

• CAN BE COSTLY

• CAN BE CAREER ENDING