Endometrial cyst ablation in a 23-year old Dutch Warmblood mare
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A 23-year old Dutch Warmblood mare presented for breeding management with cooled transported semen. Her uterus contained 15-20 endometrial cysts, several measuring 3-4 cm in diameter with multiple 1-2 cm cysts scattered throughout the endometrium. Multiple breedings were attempted but failed. Endometrial cyst ablation was recommended before attempting to breed again. A uterine biopsy was evaluated prior to cyst ablation. A “cyst map” was made to mark size and location of all cysts.

A hysteroscope was inserted through the cervix into the uterus. Each cyst was identified and ablated with a diode laser. Following ablation, the uterus was lavaged once daily for three days. On the third day, one gram of ceftiofur was infused to re-establish a healthy uterine environment. The mare returned for breeding management and insemination with cooled transported semen 30 days later. She was confirmed pregnant at 14 days. The mare carried the foal to term and delivered without complication.

Endometrial cysts form from dilations of endometrial lymphatics or glandular tissue.1,2 Presence of endometrial cysts can interfere with early pregnancy identification, embryonic movement, embryonic fixation, and delivery of placental nutrition. Diagnosis is made by transrectal ultrasonographic examination. Mares with five or more cysts greater than 10 mm have increased embryonic loss3. Treatment of endometrial cysts is necessary when the mare fails to conceive or suffers early embryonic loss for undiagnosed reasons. Treatment options include rupture using a biopsy instrument or ablation via diathermy or laser. Ablation with a laser has been shown to decrease endometrial scarring and adhesion formation.4

If overall uterine health is adequate, treatment leads to improved reproductive ability; however, recurrence is common. Breeding should be attempted soon after treatment to minimize regrowth of cysts. This case represents how appropriate identification and treatment of a common equine infertility condition can result in a positive outcome.

References