**Priapism in a Thoroughbred gelding associated with metastatic S. equi infection**

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A 12-year-old Thoroughbred gelding was presented to the North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine for acute priapism and weight loss. A physical examination was unremarkable except for poor body condition (BCS 2/9) and complete protrusion of the erect penis. The penis was reduced into the prepuce following irrigation of the corpus cavernosum with heparinized saline, injection of 10 mg of phenylephrine into the corpus cavernosum, and manual massage using nitrofurazone and DMSO ointment. A purse-string suture and penile sling were placed to assist in penile retention and support. The erection recurred approximately eight hours after the procedure, and treatment was repeated. The purse-string was removed after 48 hours due to superficial trauma. The penis remained moderately erect throughout hospitalization and was treated conservatively with a sling to prevent edema, application of tetracycline wound ointment, and hydrotherapy. Diagnostic procedures to pursue the weight loss included thoracic and abdominal ultrasound, complete blood count and chemistry, urinalysis, urine culture, rectal biopsy, and *Streptococcus equi* ELISA. Urinalysis revealed 2+ hematuria and pyuria, likely due to preputial inflammation. The serum ELISA assay for *S. equi* returned strongly positive (1:25,600), consistent with metastatic strangles abscesses. Treatment with trimethoprim sulfamethoxazole (TMS; 30 mg/kg PO BID) and rifampin (5 mg/kg PO BID) was instituted for eight weeks based on evidence that rifampin may prevent resistance and improve efficacy of the TMS against *Streptococcus* spp. sequestered in abscesses. When reexamined seventeen weeks after discharge, the gelding’s BCS was 5/9 and his priapism had improved, although the penis still protruded from the prepuce two inches at most times. Thirty weeks after discharge the animal had returned to a normal weight and the priapism was completely resolved. Priapism is rare in horses, especially geldings, and there are no reports of priapism secondary to metastatic strangles.

**Reference**