

Preface  
Infection Control



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*Guest Editors*

Nosocomial infections are of tremendous concern in human medicine and are a leading cause of death in developed countries. They also have a staggering economic impact because of prolonged hospital stays, the need for aggressive and expensive treatments, and the need for intensive infection control programs. Infection control is an established field in human medicine and infection control personnel and protocols are almost universally applied to varying degrees. The field of hospital infection control is very much in its infancy in equine medicine. Traditionally, infection control practices in equine hospitals have focused on prevention and control of nosocomial salmonellosis. However, in recent years, it has become evident that a variety of infectious agents are of concern. Additionally, increasing attention has been given to previously dismissed endemic infections that commonly occur at low levels in hospitals.

Unfortunately, the stigma of nosocomial infection has often led to reluctance to discuss the issue, either during outbreaks or in general terms. This dearth of objective information and communication has created frustrating situations for veterinarians charged with the task of preventing or managing outbreaks. Our hope is to bring this to the level of an open discussion in our profession so that these problems may be more effectively managed.

This issue of the *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Equine Practice* is dedicated to nosocomial infections in equine hospitals. While directed at issues and measures associated with hospitals, much of the information provided here should be considered relevant to all equine veterinarians, because many of the infection control principles are relevant to most if not

all practice situations. This edition was made possible, in large part, by the efforts of Mr. Gene Pranzo of the Dorothy Russell Havemeyer Foundation. Mr. Pranzo, as President of the Havemeyer Foundation, has demonstrated a profound dedication to equine research and horse welfare. The foresight and open-mindedness of the Havemeyer Foundation allowed for the composition of a workshop on infection control in equine hospitals, the first organized international meeting of veterinary clinicians and researchers with an interest in equine hospital infection control. For Gene's support, we are extremely grateful.

Based on current and historical trends in equine and human medicine, nosocomial infections are almost assuredly going to become increasingly important in equine hospitals. The impact of nosocomial infections in human hospitals is tremendous and has been well documented. The establishment of large referral hospitals and emergence of certain nosocomial pathogens has occurred later in equine medicine, compared with human medicine. This delay may allow for early establishment of appropriate infection control practices that have been developed in human medicine if adequate foresight is displayed and if complementary disease surveillance and research are performed. It is our hope that this issue will provide a basis for future communication and study in the field of equine hospital infection control, and assist veterinarians in the prevention and control of nosocomial and zoonotic diseases.

We certainly extend our thanks to Dr. Simon Turner and John Vassallo of Elsevier for allowing us to publish many of the articles originating from the Havemeyer workshop in this issue. Although this is an unusual format for the workshops, it represents an exceptional opportunity for broad distribution of this vital information to the profession. We thank them for giving us this opportunity.

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