Easy application of Maggot Debridement Therapy to treat chronic abscesses in laminitic horses

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Introduction
Hoof infections are often the cause of euthanasia in the chronic laminitis horse, especially those whose immune reactions are compromised by Cushing’s syndrome or insulin resistance. Maggot Debridement Therapy (MDT) can be an effective treatment for such infections (Jurga and Morrison 2004), but unfortunately the procedure is underutilized because it is perceived as difficult and expensive. This poster displays the ease with which MDT can be applied, and summarizes the effectiveness of the procedure.

Materials and methods
“PW” was a 19 year-old mare with chronic hoof infections in both front feet. Infections were exposed, then subjected to the protocol detailed in the photographs below. Larvae (Phaenicia sericata) were obtained from Monarch Labs in Irvine, CA.

After a second course of maggots, site was kept covered until it had dried and keratinized, approximately 6 weeks from start of treatment.

Results
As illustrated by the images here, MDT aided in the removal of the necrotic and infected tissue, and new healthy tissue was able to grow.

Including “PW,” our hoof-care practice has used MDT to successfully resolve conditions in 15 horses since November 2009.

Conclusions
Maggot Debridement Therapy is an incredibly useful tool when fighting hoof infection in the chronically laminitic horse. The availability of a less expensive, easier method means Maggot Debridement Therapy is more accessible for more animals and can also be applied in the field by the veterinarian, hoof-care provider, or the animal’s other care-givers when prescribed.

Literature cited

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Further information
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