



BHA Medication & Doping Control Research Summary: Prednisolone (Prednidale®, 25 mg Dechra)

Why the research was needed

Prednisolone is a corticosteroid medication widely used in animals and humans for the treatment of inflammatory conditions. There is no preparation licensed for use in horses in Britain but under veterinary medicine prescribing rules ([‘cascade’](#)) equine veterinarians are able to use tablets licensed in dogs. The primary aim of these studies was to develop advice for veterinarians and trainers on the use of this medication. Secondary aspects included increasing our understanding how prednisolone is handled and works in the horse. The studies were part of the 2011 programme to develop advice for ‘priority substances’ by the European Horserace Scientific Liaison Committee ([EHSLC](#)). By working as a member of the EHSLC we reduce the overall number of animal studies needed and prevent spending unnecessary time and money through pooling of information. We usually also achieve harmonisation on the output, usually a [Detection Time](#), and it’s underlying screening limit both within Europe and now beyond via our input into the [IFHA](#)’s work on International Screening Limits.

Overview of the study

The work was carried out with horses at the Authority’s Centre for Racehorse Studies with analysis at HFL Sport Science. Research procedures, complying with the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act were subject to ethical review and the analyses were conducted to industry standard quality procedures. The study was in stages, a two horse ‘pilot’ in April 2010 followed by a main study in June, to give data from a total of 6 horses. The drug was given at a therapeutic dose (1 mg/kg bodyweight) in the horses’ feed for 5 days during which time blood and urine samples were taken. A jugular vein catheter was then placed for two days of more intensive blood sampling, before being removed and followed by a further 6 days of reduced blood and urine sampling.

Outcome

These study results were complicated, with concentrations of prednisolone and prednisone (prednisone is converted into prednisolone by the liver), their metabolites and cortisone having been measured. They prompted significant international discussion about how best to deal with this substance in the laboratory, including an international survey of results. A decision on a Detection Time and underlying International Screening Limit was finally made in October 2011, with the BHA being able to publish that Detection Time of ≤ 48 hours for [prednisolone](#) on 28th November 2011.

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