New Study Discovers VivaStem™ (Stem Cell Fluid) Aids In Full Recovery From EPM Residual Ataxia

By Marie Hoffman

I walked out to do chores one evening at our stable, On Eagles Wings Equine Center LLC, in Kirkland, Illinois, only to see my favored old gelding walking in circles. He was unable to walk in a straight line. When I led him he walked sideways with his hip off to one side and he was very unstable. The vet diagnosed EPM, **equine protozoal myeloencephtalitis**.

The vet ordered the best EPM drug on the market at the time and performed supportive treatment. The crisis was averted - he walked a bit crooked but he could walk and was not spinning in circles. A few weeks post treatment, he was walking in circles again. Again the vet came out to give supportive treatment. We put him on a different drug; he stabilized again but stayed in the wobbly ataxia state till he passed away of old age. My horse never fully recovered from EPM.

I discovered this is a common story of those unfortunate horse owners who notice their horse is moving in an unusual way. The vet comes out and diagnoses EPM. The vet prescribes the drugs to kill the protozoa that have invaded the cells of the central nervous system. As the protozoa multiply they burst out of the cell and migrate to more cells leaving a lesion on the CNS (central nervous system.) Once there are enough lesions in the CNS, neurological symptoms begin to manifest. Inflammation of the CNS and the consequent muscular problems are typical presentation of EPM. This lack of coordination and strength is called “residual ataxia.”

Thousands of horses are affected with EPM in the United States each month. Opossums are the most common host of the protozoa, passing them on to the horse through their feces. If your horse lives where opossums live, or if you purchase hay from places where opossums live, it is likely your horse is exposed to EPM.

EPM is difficult to diagnose, as its neurological symptoms can mimic many other neurological conditions and diseases.

Blood tests that are often used are the ELISA SAG and Western blot tests, which are for antigen levels in blood. Levels of antigen can be high with no neurological symptoms, or they can be low with significant neurological symptoms. Therefore interpreting prognosis of the horse from the antigen levels is at best difficult. Though the antigen levels can give some information regarding the status of the protozoal infection, they say little about the residual ataxia, which remains following the EPM infection and drug treatment.

Conventional drug treatment is considered successful if the horse improves one grade level on a 5 level Mayhew scale grading system. This leaves many horses far from normal, often times relapsing with mild to severe neurological symptoms. The drugs can stop the initial crisis and the horses become stable, then stall in their level of ataxia. These horses are unable to return to past performance levels with many only able to be pasture pets.

The company VivaStem™ "stem cell fluid" research team investigated the possibility of stem cell fluid to help horses recovered fully from residual ataxia of EPM. VivaStem™ had already proven to be effective in studies on dogs with injured backs that were paralyzed in the rear half of their bodies. These dogs have recovered to be able to walk and play, regaining control of their bodily functions. VivaStem™ was also studied on horses' shoulder sweeney, where the muscle atrophied from trauma causing nerve damage. The horse made a full recovery.

This research indicated that VivaStem™ treated animals responded by reducing the inflammation of the central nervous system and regenerating the nerves. The next research project was to determine if VivaStem™ could improve horses with residual EPM ataxia. These ataxic horses need aid in the healing of nerves and reducing inflammation.

VivaStem™ conducted a veterinarian-supervised study on post EPM drug treated horses with moderate to severe ataxia. To qualify for the study, the horses had to have been previously diagnosed by a veterinarian and treated with a commercial drug for EPM. The horses had to have ataxia that was detectable by a neurological exam, conducted by a veterinarian. Horses were aged 3 to 25 years, and breeds included Paint, Quarter Horse, Thoroughbred and Warmblood, both mares and geldings. Fifty percent of the horses had residual ataxia for 1 to 9 years; the remaining had stagnated for 30 days or developed worsening ataxia 30 to 90 days post EPM drug treatment.

At the beginning of the study these horses scored anywhere from 4 (profound deficits) to 3 (deficits prominent) on the Mayhew Scale. All recovered to Mayhew scale score of 0 (normal) within 60 to 90 days. All the horses continued to be normal post VivaStem™ treatment without relapsing.

All horses were injected subcutaneously (under the skin) with one dose of 10 cc of stem cell fluid (VivaStem™) at the start of the study. Stem cell fluid is NOT the same as "stem cells," as stem cell fluid is truly unique.

VivaStem™ is the result of 10 years of research by a major Chicago hospital research team and three years of trials. VivaStem™ is a patent pending drug in the USA and Europe, with FDA approval process underway.

Studies indicate when this fluid is injected under the skin of the sick animal it activates the stem cells of that animal which brings about an accelerated natural healing.

More information about VivaStem™, (stem cell fluid) is available at www.stemcellfluidtherapy.com

The study horses gradually improved in their ataxic symptoms and strength during the 90-day trial. The greatest neurological improvement occurred during the first 45 days with the horses becoming aware of where their legs were, moving them in a more normal manner while circling, backing, lunging, and when placed across the opposing leg. The awareness of their top line and the gaining of strength varied, with the younger horses recovering more quickly than the older horses.

During the last 45 days, the horses gradually gained strength and continued improvement in neurological awareness until they were normal.

All horses tested normal in their neurological tests by 60 to 90 days. Strength improved in all the horses, gaining normal strength by 90 days, with the exception of the oldest horse, (25+ years) although his neurological tests were completely normal, and he could have improved in his strength. The conclusion was his lack of strength was due to inactivity. He will be put on a reconditioning program as soon as weather permits.

Learn more about the study EPM case summary at:
http://www.stemcellfluidtherapy.com/casestudies.html

All the horses have returned to their pre EPM condition and their normal jobs. Even the oldest horse by 75 days was back safely trail riding for a couple hours on hill terrain. The owners commented on how their horses' personalities went back to pre EPM personalities.

At the writing of this article, the study horses in 150 and 120 days post VivaStem™ treatment have continued to remain normal, with no indicators of relapsing in neurological symptoms. The remaining study horses have just finished the 90-day study, remaining normal in neurological symptoms and strength.

EPM Horses that have received VivaStem™, but were outside the study, have also responded favorably.

The conclusion of this study indicates that one dose of VivaStem™ (stem cell fluid) helped horses with residual ataxia recover to pre EPM condition.

All the owners of the study horses are thrilled to have their horses back to normal and some after a very long struggle with this devastating condition. One owner wrote, "Thank you VivaStem™ for giving me my horse back."

About the Author

Marie Hoffman, of On Eagles Wings Equine Center, LLC, has been a full time equine professional for over 40 years. In 2010, On Eagles Wings joined VivaStem™ Laboratories, LLC to become the study farm for VivaStem™, with Marie becoming the research coordinator. Since that time, under the supervision of veterinarian Dr. Chris Serpico, DVM, Marie has continued to find horses to study various different problems and record the results. Some successful horse studies at OEW have been EPM ataxia, sore hocks and knees, undiagnosed lameness, tendon issues, inflamed lamina, shoulder sweeney and topically for uveitis.

Marie and her farm donate time and facilities to VivaStem™ for research purposes; her sole connection with VivaStem™ is as representative, the very small amount of money earned is used entirely toward research labs costs. Says Marie, "I have made my living from horses all my life and this is a way for me to give back to the horse. My reward is in every horse that is helped."