

ECB Spa Case Study 8:



Wound – Chronic Grannulating 1.

This top class TB mare was first injured while at stud in December 2000. Whether cast or rolling, her leg pushed out the bottom of the stable door and a large area of skin was torn and damaged on the inside of her off hind canon, just below the hock. She was conservatively treated for some weeks and then underwent a punch skin graft at the RCVS.

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The skin graft took on the lower inner edge but did not take on the upper rear side toward the hock. Over a period of 18 months the horse was regularly treated due to the continuing growth of proud flesh on the upper edge and particularly where it spread and enlarged behind and just below the hock making bandaging difficult.

The mare was sent to TCNET in late June 2002, when 4 months pregnant and with limited mobility. Photographs, taken when she left Hedsor Stud show extent of grannulation below hock and contracted skin graft sections lower medial canon (Fig 1.).

There was grave concern for the health of her valuable thoroughbred pregnancy.

Fig 1a. & 1b. 28/06/02



Fig 2a. & 2b. 05/07/02



Initially the mare was put through the spa daily for 3 days to reduce swelling. After going through the Spa on the third day, she had the granulation tissue scraped, washed, covered with *Vetguard* wound gel, and bandaged with *Bioband** elastic gauze bandage. This was then covered and wrapped with tight leg wraps and left for three days. After 3 days the wound had improved immensely (Fig 2.). The mare began walking well and was able to be turned out daily.

**Bioband* bandage contains fibres that carry "triclosan", an antimicrobial slow release substance that prevents the growth of most organisms. It is the same product found in some forms of toothpaste and skin washes and provides a clean environment for the skin edges to develop to cover over wounds.

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Wound – Chronic Grannulating 2.

Spa therapy stimulated the granulation tissue, but also importantly reduced the wound base. After another three weeks of *Bioband* bandaging, *lotagen* was introduced rather than the use of the wound gel (*lotagen* is used regularly in Australia and Ireland and was introduced for a more rapid closure). Photos taken on 30/07/02 (Fig 3.) show the wound before *lotagen* treatment started.

After two, 3 day treatment periods with the spa, *bioband*, *lotagen* regime, a dramatic improvement in wound closure was evident with the posterior surface pulled around onto the inside of the leg (Fig 4.) The mare was much improved in overall demeanor and was quite happy to gallop and play in the field

Fig 3a. & 3b.

30/07/02



Fig 4.

05/08/02



Fig 5.

15/08/02



The wound was responding so well (Fig 5.) that a decision had to be made about future treatment. The spa, *bioband*, *lotagen* routine was working very well but the major concern was when should a decision be made to stop bandaging. It must be remembered this leg has been bandaged for over eighteen months. All the subcutaneous lymphatic vessels and small veins have had an artificial support around them for that period and removal of that support even in the apparently normal skin area would result in immediate swelling.

The decision to try the leg without support bandaging was made on 21st August, as the wound appeared so close to being closed over. In anticipation that the leg would probably swell it was also decided to put the mare through the spa daily to try and prevent swelling. Bad decision. The leg swelling was largely controlled by the cold spa treatment but as each day went the leg started to get more oedematous causing the original wound to increase in size. At the same time the uppermost skin graft spot, that had always looked less healthy, lifted to expose a chronic ulcer underneath. This was scraped back to initiate new granulation tissue and the leg was then rebandaged and the previous spa, *bioband*, *lotagen* three day routine was recommenced. The leg responded rapidly and quickly returned to the size it had been in August. The graft ulcer healed over and the treatment allowed new skin edges to come in over the wound.

The mare was returned home with the leg still bandaged with directions to continue with the *lotagen* and a strip of *bioband* over the small wound area but to gradually reduce the pressure applied to the bandage to allow the leg to gradually redevelop its own support mechanism for the fluid flow within the leg. After a further three weeks the leg was closed and the mare was only bandaged at night, as she was now seven months pregnant.