
Dukes Vet Practice
www.dukesvets.com

Getting the best out of your horse

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Jim Dukes, BVM&S, MRCVS

“Response to treatment for lameness”

- What do we know about lameness in horses?
- Our approach to treatment and effectiveness

What are you expecting from your horse?

Discipline:

- Type of activity
- Competitive level
- Quality of venue

Horse factors:

- Age
- Wear and tear
- Previous injury
- Fitness
- Body Condition Score

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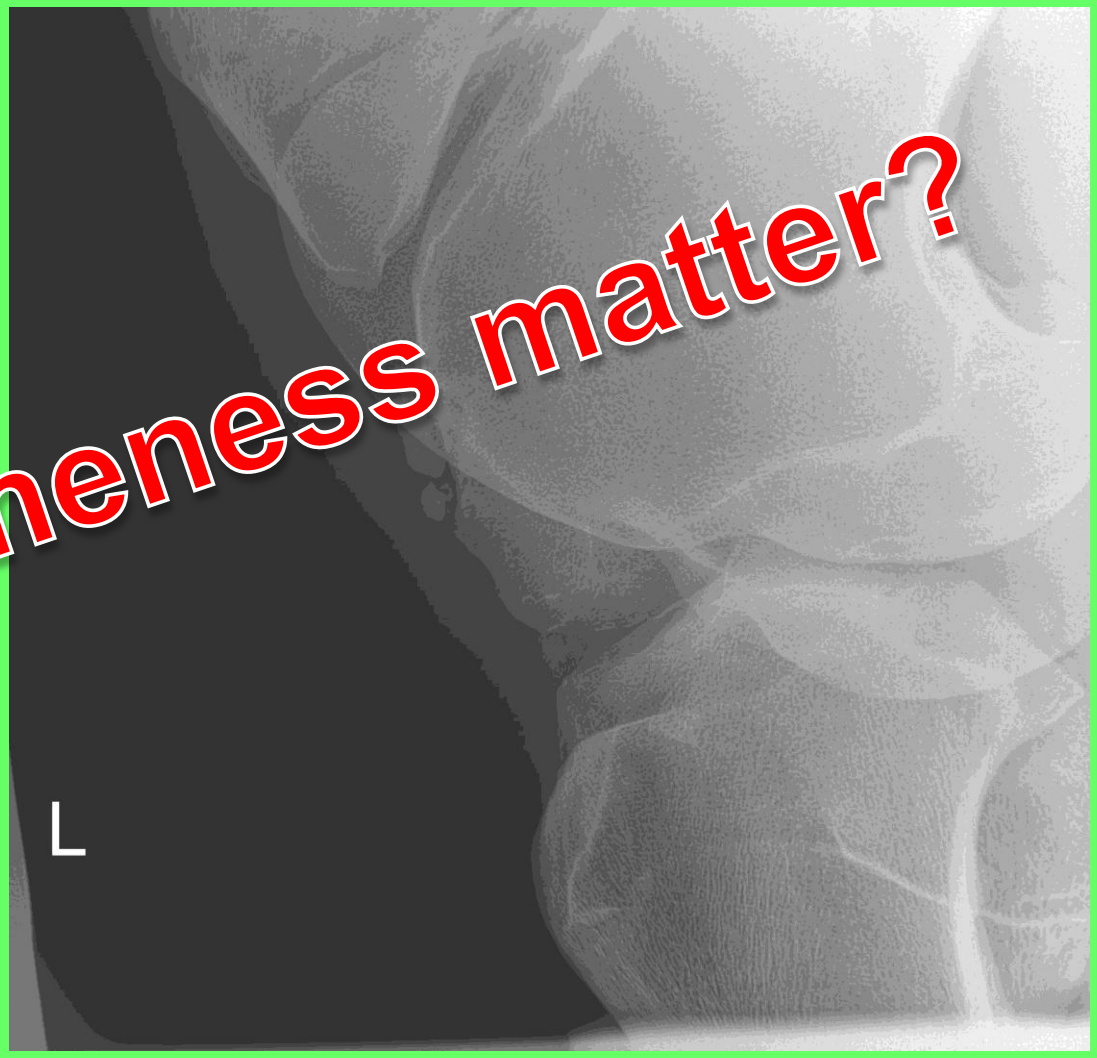
Is your horse lame?

2014

Dr Sue Dyson, world renowned equine orthopaedic expert.

Study assessed 506 normal, working sport horses.

Of the 506 46% (2[illegible] were classified as lame or having a stiff, stilted canter.



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Causes of lameness

Pain

- Injury/Trauma
- Infection
- Degenerative conditions

Mechanical lameness

Nerve deficit

Investigating lameness

Clinical examination

“Lameness workup”

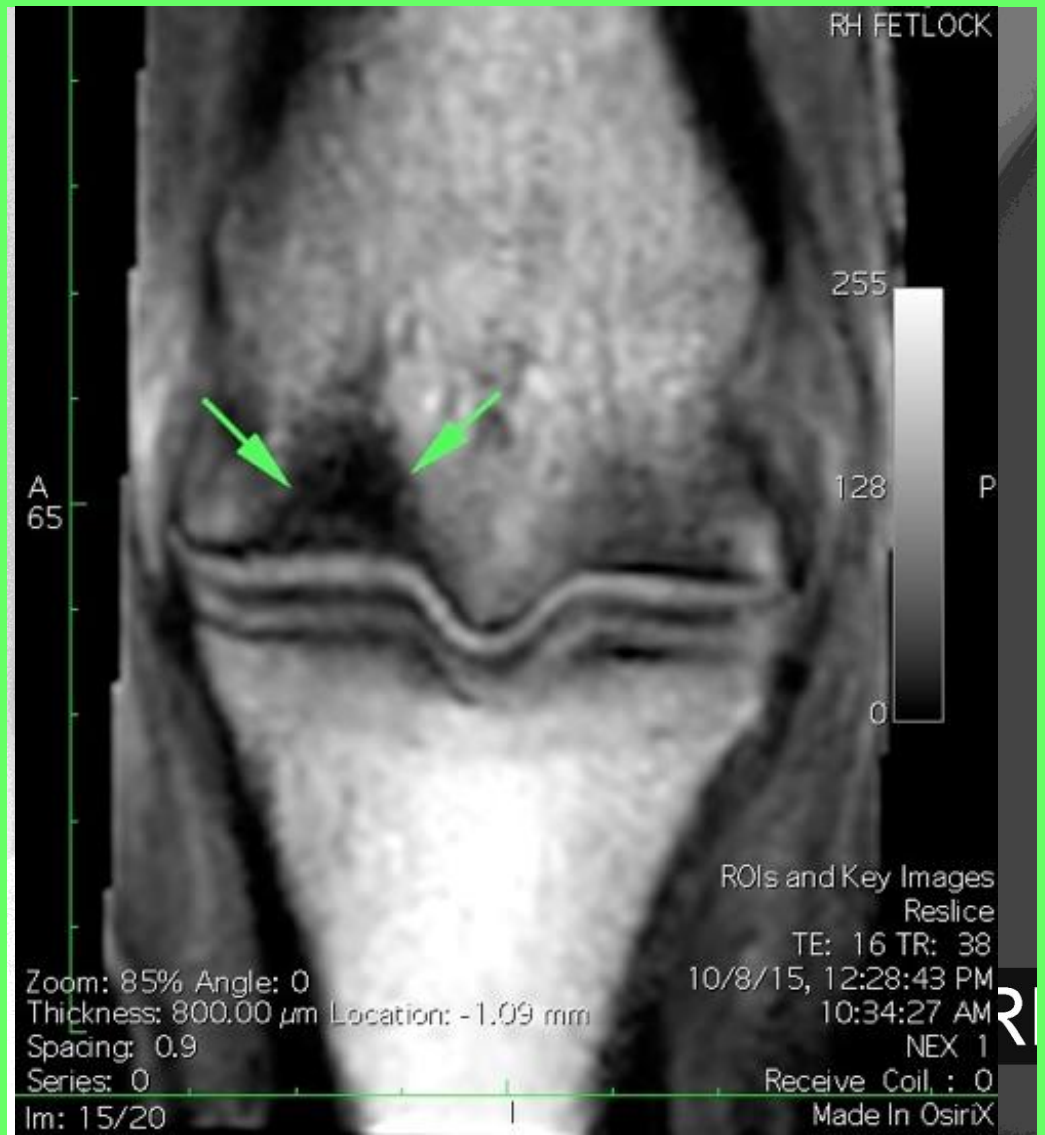
Diagnostic analgesia

- Regional nerve blocks
- Specific structure analgesia

Diagnostic imaging

- X ray
- Ultrasound
- Scintigraphy
- MRI
- CT scan

Response to treatment



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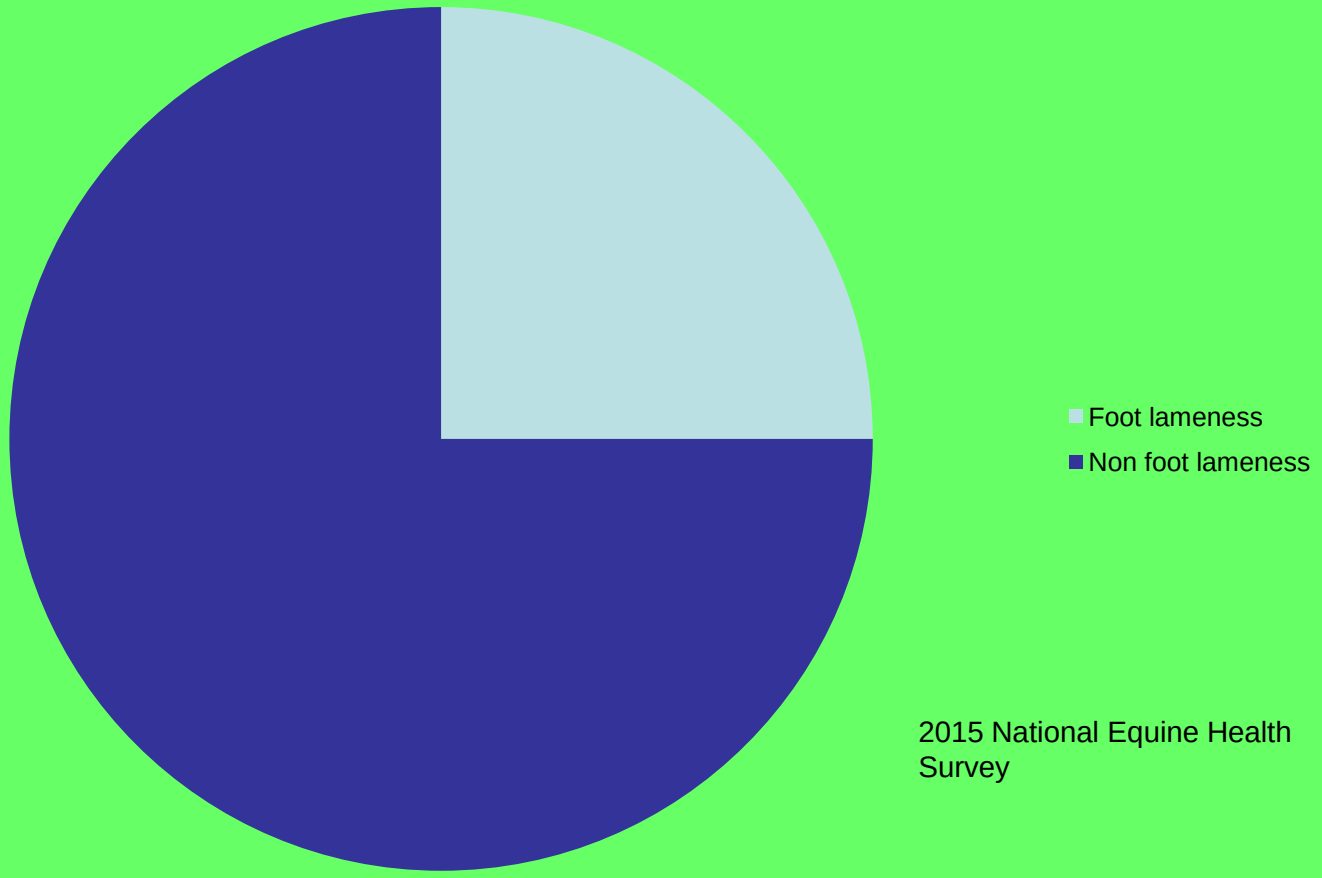
Cause of lameness



2015 National Equine Health Survey

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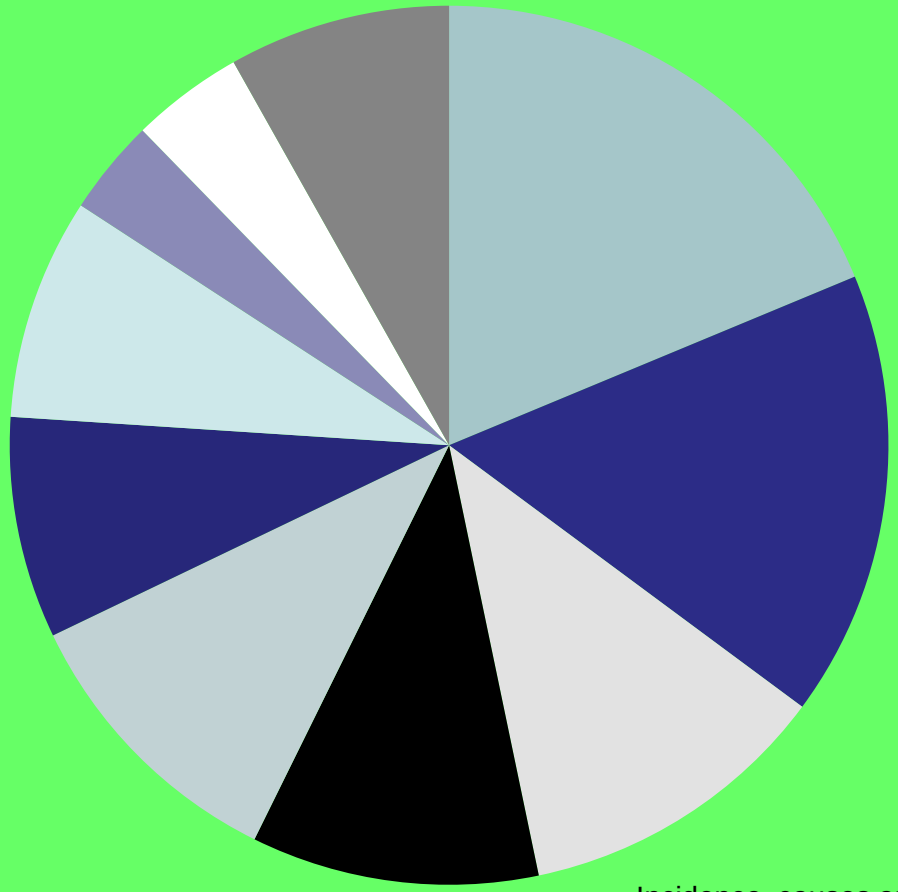
Cause of lameness



Incidence, causes and outcomes of lameness cases in a working military horse population: A field study
J. R. C. PUTNAM*, L. M. HOLMES, M. J. GREEN and S. L. FREEMAN

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The Importance of Foot balance

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The effect of foot imbalance

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Ligament and tendon strains

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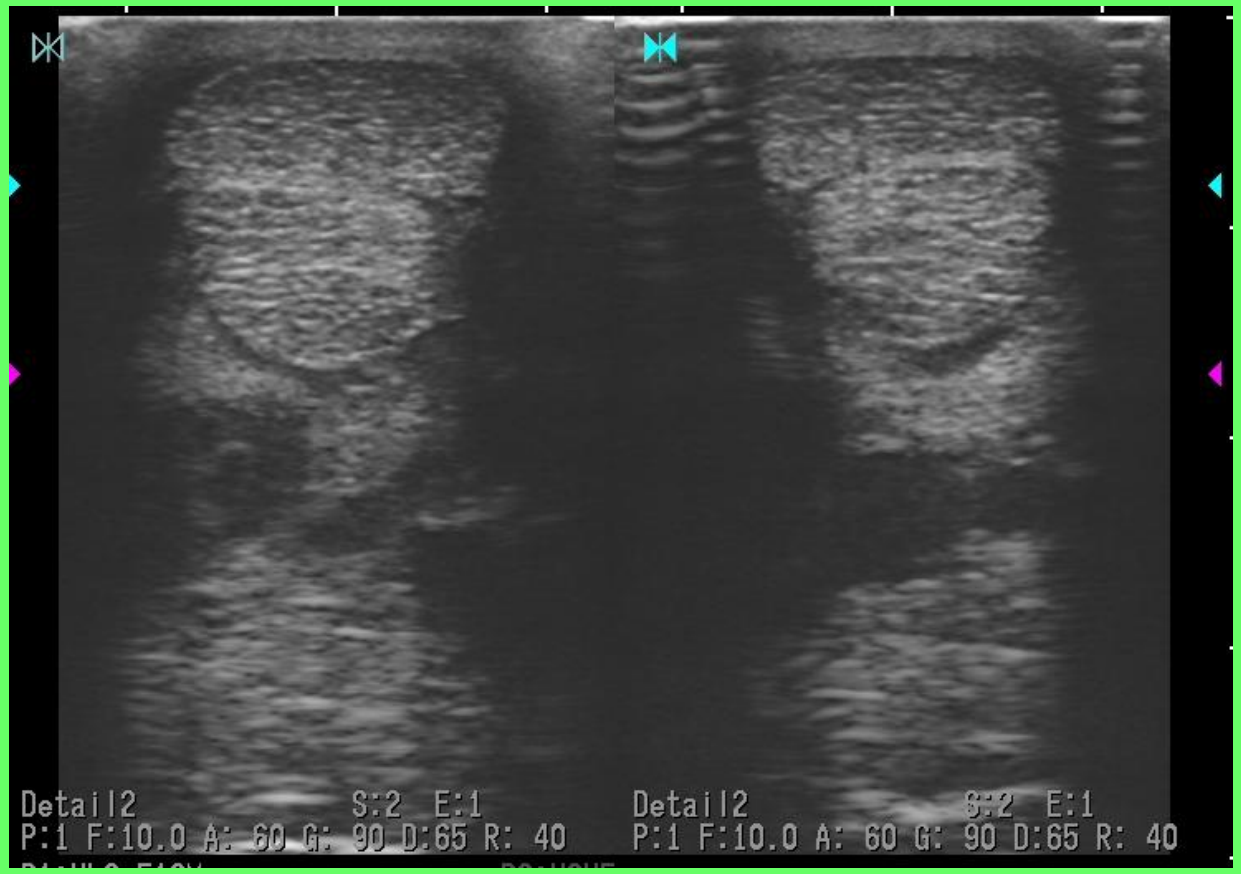
Check ligament injury



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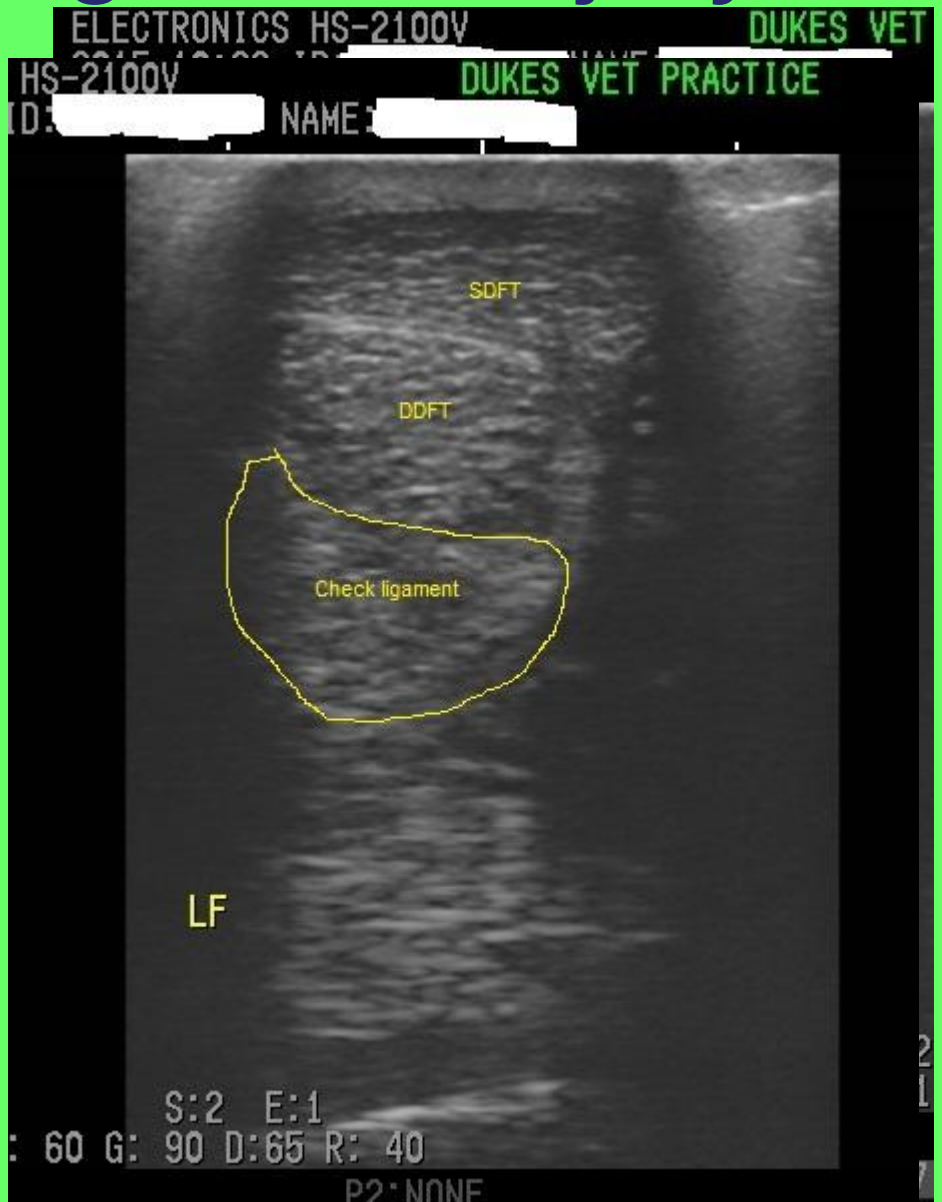
Check ligament injury

Commonest type of tendon or ligament injury we see

- Swelling proximal third back of canon bone
- May be hot painful and lame but initially can present as swelling with no associated heat, pain or lameness
- Ultrasound scan essential to assess severity

Treatment

- Shockwave



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Shockwave therapy

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Types of joint in the horse

Fibrous

Cartilaginous

Synovial

- High motion joints
- Low motion joints

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What goes wrong

Inflammation

Production of enzymes to remove diseased tissue

Damage to synovial membrane

Poorer quality joint fluid

Cartilage degredation

New bone formation

Further inflammation

Treatments

Rest

But where is the evidence?

BBB!!!

Treatments

Rest

But where is the evidence?

BBB!!!

Prompt and accurate diagnosis of severe lameness is essential. Careful targeted controlled exercise may give faster healing and better long term prognosis

For tendon, ligament and joint injuries controlled exercise program after diagnosis

Rehabilitation after box rest

Role of NSAIDS

- Work on the chemical inflammatory pathway
- Positive effect on the feedback loop
- Cost effective for short term use
- Limited efficacy

Long term use

- Efficacy will reduce with time
- High risk of side effects
- Can be expensive

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Shockwave

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Joint medication

- Case selection
- Risks
- Preparation
- Choice of medication
- Response to treatment

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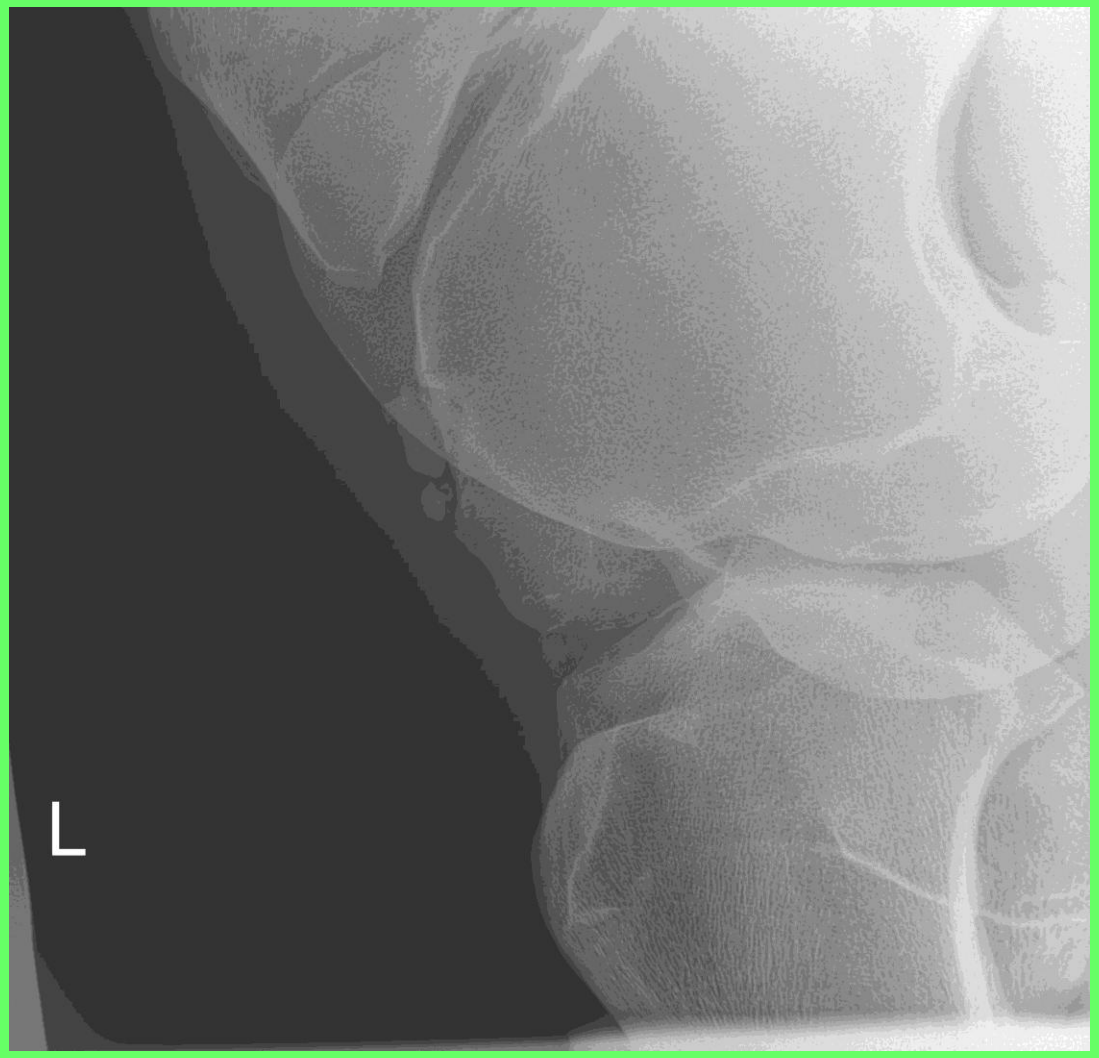
Joint Surgery

- High anaesthetic risk!!
- Careful case selection

  Don’t operate just because you can!



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Equidronate (tildren)

- Decrease bone turnover
- Reduce new bone formation
- Spavins, navicular disease and kissing spines

Summary

- It is important to know what the problem is to provide the most appropriate treatment
- The cheapest treatment is not always the best
- The most expensive treatment is not always the best either!
- We won't get every lame horse sound but there are good and effective treatments for many cases
- Each horse is an individual and we try and treat them as such

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