

QUESTION: Does a Gastric Ulcer Supplement Improve Clinical and Owner Reported Symptoms in Horses with Equine Gastric Ulcer Syndrome?

Background

- Equine gastric ulcer syndrome (EGUS) is common in exercising horses and is further categorised as equine squamous gastric disease (ESGD) and/or equine glandular gastric disease (EGGD)¹. Despite medication and changes in management, a proportion of horses suffer recurrence of EGUS.
- A feed or supplement that could be used to aid the effective management of EGUS would be useful. GastroKind (Science Supplements) contains a combination of Vitamin E, Vitamin C, yeast powder, fruit pectin, lecithin, magnesium hydroxide and a novel (patented) fruit extract of *Ficus glomerata*.

Aim of Study

To investigate the effect of GastroKind on clinical and owner reported symptoms in horses with Equine Gastric Ulcer Syndrome

Study Design

- Prospective clinical case series* = a group of horses selected for a particular reason (EGUS in this study) was followed over several months following an intervention (treatment).

Study Outline

Eight horses diagnosed with EGUS grade 1- 4¹ by gastroscopy were enrolled in the trial. Five horses (62.5%) had ESGD whereas all 8 horses (100%) had EGGD (Table 1). Five horses with grade 1 or 2 ulceration were treated with GastroKind only. Three horses were given the recommended GastroKind dose (300ml twice daily) and two horses were given 100ml twice daily. Three horses with grade 3 or 4 ulceration were treated with oral omeprazole at standard doses (4mg/kg or 2mg/kg once daily) and GastroKind 300ml twice daily (Table 1). Horses underwent a second gastroscopic examination after approximately 4 weeks of treatment.

Study Results

- All 8 horses with EGUS showed significant clinical improvement with either complete resolution of ulcers or reduction in ulcer score at second gastroscopy (Table 1).
- Both ESGD and EGGD scores were significantly decreased at post-treatment gastroscopy (Figure 1). In the five cases treated with GastroKind alone, behavioural and gastroscopic improvements were observed resulting in reduction of at least one grade of ulcer severity (Table 1).

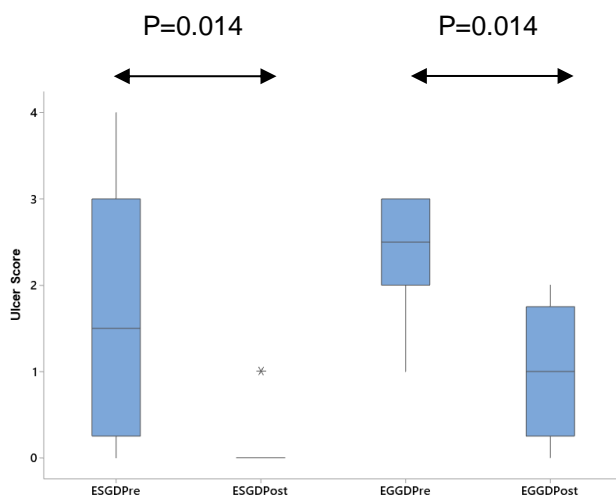


Figure 1: Equine squamous gastric disease (ESGD) and equine glandular gastric disease (EGGD) scores pre- and post- treatment with Gastrokind oral supplement ± oral omeprazole. Ulcer grade was significantly lower for both ESGD and EGGD following treatment (P=0.014). * denotes outlier.

Horse	Initial Complaint	Gastroscopy 1	Treatment	Gastroscopy 2
1	Recent behavioural changes in stable and under saddle	Grade 2 ESGD with focal grade 3, grade 2/3 EGGD	GK 300ml + 4mg/kg omeprazole 7d then 2 mg/kg	Improved behaviour, ESGD resolved, grade 1 EGGD
2	Resents girthing, stops at jumps, spooky behaviour	Diffuse grade 1, focal grades 2 & 3 ESGD, grade 3 EGGD with bleeding	GK 300ml + 4mg/kg omeprazole 7d then 2 mg/kg 14d	Excellent behavioural response, ESGD resolved, grade 1 EGGD
3	Crib biting, lethargy, poor outline	Grade 3/4 ESGD with bleeding, grade 2 EGGD	GK 300ml + 4mg/kg omeprazole 14d then 2mg/kg	Initial good response, deteriorated when omeprazole reduced, improved when full dose reinstated; ESGD resolved, EGGD grade 2
4	Aggressive when tacked up, reluctance to go forward, kicking out at canter transition	Grade 1 ESGD, Grade 1-2 EGGD	GK 300ml	EGUS resolved
5	Crib biting, resents girthing and leg aids, bucking when ridden	Grade 2 EGGD	GK 300ml	Improved performance, grade 1 EGGD
6	Resistance in ridden work, difficult to handle	Grade 1 EGGD	GK 300ml	Excellent behavioural response, EGGD resolved
7	Bucking when ridden, spooky, aggressive when girthed	Grade 2 ESGD, Grade 2 EGGD with focal grade 3	GK 100ml	Improved behaviour, grade 1 ESGD, grade 1 EGGD
8	Poor doer, anxious when ridden	Grade 1 ESGD, Grade 3 EGGD	GK 100ml	ESGD resolved, grade 2 EGGD

Table 1: Treatment and gastroscopy findings of horses (n=8) with equine gastric ulcer syndrome (EGUS) treated with Gastrokind (GK) supplementation \pm oral omeprazole. ESGD equine squamous gastric disease; EGGD equine glandular gastric disease.

Take Home Message

- GastroKind supplementation resulted in improved behaviour and reduced gastroscopic ulcer scores in 5 horses with grade 1 and 2 gastric ulceration. Supplementation of Gastrokind in addition to oral omeprazole led to significant decrease in ulcer scores in 8/8 horses with EGGD \pm ESGD.

References

- Sykes, B., Hewetson, M., Hepburn, R., Luthersson, N. and Tamzali, Y. (2015), European College of Equine Internal Medicine Consensus Statement—Equine Gastric Ulcer Syndrome in Adult Horses. J Vet Intern Med, 29: 1288-1299