

Advanced Equine Reproduction Course

by

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Risks of Hysterectomy/Ovariohysterectomy of the Mare

Ovariohysterectomy (OHE) is a very rare surgical procedure performed in the mare¹. Since these surgeries are rarely performed, no known published data exists on mortality rates associated with the surgical procedure. Some data exists on mortality rates dealing with caesarean sections which, since related to the reproductive tract, will be used as a guideline. One study has noted an 80% survival rate of 57 mares for caesarean sections², while a second study noted that 17 of 19 mares (89%) were discharged from the hospital³. Of those 17 survivals, 13 (76%) showed signs of abdominal pain. Two of the 13 mares with abdominal pain went in for a second celiotomy, noting that both of their large colons had been displaced. Also, of the 17 survivals, 10 (59%) of the mares became anemic after surgery; however, none of the mares were transfused.

It is difficult to establish a mortality rate associated with OHE in the mare with no known published reports, but caesarean section associated mortality rates may give the surgeon an idea of whether or not to perform an OHE.

There is not much in the literature regarding the mortality rates of hysterectomy in the mare. However, it is reported that if peritonitis can be avoided, hysterectomy and partial hysterectomy can be successful procedures with a good prognosis for a full return to usable non-breeding function. In a clinical report published in 1995 by [Santschi, et al.](#), six mares successfully underwent hysterectomy with only one mare requiring euthanasia due to postoperative complications. This is an 83% success rate. The most significant complication of hysterectomy in a mare is the development of peritonitis due to contamination with uterine debris. By removing as much uterine fluid as possible before attempting surgery, minimizing peritoneal contamination during surgery, and ensuring proper ligation and closure of the residual reproductive tract, the risk of peritonitis can be reduced. Other postoperative complications that have been associated with this surgery include abdominal hemorrhage, uterine stump infection, colic, and incisional infection. Therefore, proper surgical technique and good, thorough postoperative care are necessary to limit these complications and ensure a good prognosis.

¹ Slone DE. Ovariectomy, Ovariohysterectomy and Cesarean Section in Mares. *Vet Clinics North Am [Large Anim Pract]* 1988;4: 451-459.

² Walker DF, Vaughan JT. *Bovine and Equine Urogenital Surgery*. Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger, 1980:229-232.

³ Juzwiak JS, Slone DE, Santschi EM, Moll HD. Cesarean Section in 19 Mares. *Vet Surg* 1990; 19:50-52.

Note: An attempt was made to find published mortality rates dealing with complications of ovariectomy. However, published articles only warned against the possibility of peritonitis, hemorrhage, and evisceration.

Further Reading:

- ¹ Slone DE. Ovariectomy, Ovariohysterectomy and Cesarean Section in Mares. *Vet Clinics North Am [Large Anim Pract]* 1988;4: 451-459.
- ² Walker DF, Vaughan JT. *Bovine and Equine Urogenital Surgery*. Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger, 1980:229-232.
- ³ Juzwiak JS, Slone DE, Santschi EM, Moll HD. Cesarean Section in 19 Mares. *Vet Surg* 1990; 19:50-52.