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## **Puerperal Problems in Mare Reviewed**

Mares are most susceptible to developing puerperal (after birthing) diseases within the first 10 days of delivering a foal. "Stress, the beginning of lactation, and the regeneration and rebuilding of the uterus are all occurring at this time," all of which can contribute to the mare's increased risk of developing issues, said Axel Wehrend, DrMedVet, PhD, Dipl. ECAR, ECBHM, Head of Veterinary Clinics of the Justus-Liebig University, in Giessen, Germany.

But which problems are most common? Wehrend and colleagues recently sought to find out.

In their study of 308 mares that presented to a university equine clinic over a 10-year period, the team identified 21 puerperal diseases. The most common issues were retained placenta, lochiometra (an accumulation of fluid in the uterus after birthing and an ideal medium for bacteria, Wehrend said), and injuries to the perineum (the area between the mare's anus and vulva).

In many cases, mares suffering from one disease suffered from multiple foaling-related ailments, the team found.

"Mares with a retained placenta most commonly also presented with perineal ruptures," Wehrend said. Mares suffering from lochiometra were also likely to have a retained placenta and injuries resulting from birth. Further, some of the study mares developed additional issues, such as laminitis and blood clots, after foaling, the team said.

Close observation and immediate veterinary care is critical to treating mares with puerperal disease. "If there is something suspected, a good observation of the birthing process and a quick calling of the veterinarian is important," Wehrend emphasized.

"The data collection shows that several diseases could relatively frequently be diagnosed in mares with puerperal disorders," Wehrend said. Thus, he concluded, veterinarians should consider additional diseases when treating mares with puerperal disease.