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NOTES

A recent radiological study was performed using 122 sports horses and general purpose riding horses either with no clinical signs referable to the neck (n = 77), or with clinical signs related to lesions of the fifth and sixth cervical vertebrae (n = 45) (Down and Henson 2009). Radiographs of the caudal APJs of the cervical vertebrae were graded objectively by 2 analysts. There was no significant association between discipline, breed, age or clinical signs, although there was a trend for more severe lesions in older horses. The lack of association of grade with age may reflect both the relatively small size of the study population and the under representation of very young horses. Nonetheless the presence of abnormalities consistent with osteoarthritis is not synonymous with clinically significant lesions.

Major radiological abnormalities such as fusion of 2 adjacent vertebrae can be present subclinically, in part because of the great mobility between adjacent vertebrae. The clinical significance of such lesions may also be determined by the athletic demands placed on the horse.

References


