



British Horseracing Authority Medication and Doping Control Research Summary: Detomidine ('pilot' study) – Updated April 2012

Why the research was needed

Detomidine is widely used in horses when routine sedation is required, for procedures such as clipping, dentistry or suturing a wound. It has been available as an intravenous prescription only (POM-V) preparation for many years but a newer gel [version](#) of it for giving by mouth to horses by owners (also 'POM-V') was launched in the UK in 2010. The primary reason for this study was to develop a Detection Time (DT) for this medication to inform veterinarians and trainers as to its use with minimal risk of it being present in the horse on raceday. Advice is particularly important in the light of its potential ease of use by trainers. The study is part of our programme to develop DTs for medications considered 'priority substances' by the [EHSLC](#). By working with the EHSLC, we reduce the number of animal studies each EHSLC member needs to do, prevent duplication and work towards faster harmonisation of DTs. This is a relatively new product; it was our aim that data from our pilot study would be shared to inform others interested in regulating its use and if possible reduce their need to carry out further studies involving administration to horses.

Overview of the study

This pilot study was conducted using horses at the Authority's Centre for Racehorse Studies with analysis at HFL Sport Science. Research procedures, complying with the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, were subject to ethical review and analyses conducted to industry standard quality procedures. The effect of detomidine is dose related. The dose used, 40 mcg/kg bodyweight, was the manufacturer's recommended dose for 'moderate' sedation. Detomidine is a potent sedative; care was taken in terms of horse, staff and student safety.

Outcome and conclusions

The samples from this study were successfully analysed and are now being assessed in conjunction with several other sources of data – one publication from the [manufacturer](#) and [another](#) from a research group in the US in 2011, plus our own and EHSLC data from studies also in 2011, involving the intravenous administration of detomidine. We anticipate taking a recommendation from this to the EHSLC in July 2012 for a decision on DT advice.