

## **Rhodococcus Equi Skin Infection In An Fiv Positive Cat.**

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#### Case Study

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#### Case History

A two year-old female cat of unknown desexing status was presented for large skin wound on the caudal lateral abdomen. The wound failed to respond to surgical debridement and empiric treatment with Amoxicillin-clavulanate, meloxicam and chlorhexidine bathing. Swabs were collected for microbiological analysis, gram stain suggested and culture confirmed *Rhodococcus equi* was present in the wound. The cat was subsequently tested for retrovirus and was positive for FIV. Treatment with clarithromycin and rifampicin was initiated. Improvement was noted on the wound. Multiple side-effects of the treatment regime were noted. Meloxicam and rifampicin treatment was discontinued after ~6 weeks due to side-effects. One week after discontinuation purulent discharge returned, gram staining of the discharge was consistent with *R. equi*, the owner elected euthanasia at this point.

*Rhodococcus equi* has been reported in small case series globally in cats<sup>1</sup>, this is the first report of an infection in cats in New Zealand, although the organism has been identified in the environment and other species. Increasing cases in humans have been associated with immunosuppression, including from HIV<sup>2</sup>, but other feline case reports have not tested for or found FIV. This case did test positive for FIV antibodies, despite this significant clinical improvement was observed in the lesion. This case serves as a reminder for clinicians to look for immunosuppression in *R. equi* cases. While FIV infection is expected to give a poorer prognosis it may still be possible to treat these cases.

1. Aslam MW, Lau SF, Chin CSL et al. Clinicopathological and radiographic features in 40 cats diagnosed with pulmonary and cutaneous *Rhodococcus equi* infection (2012-2018). *J Feline Med Surg* 2020;22:774-790.
2. Weinstock DM, Brown AE. *Rhodococcus equi*: an emerging pathogen. *Clin Infect Dis* 2002;34:1379-1385.