



## TREATMENT FOR OCULAR TUMOURS IN HORSES

The two most common eyelid and ocular tumours we see in horses are sarcoids, and squamous cell carcinomas.

Due to the proximity of the tumours to the horse's eye, and the need for wide excision when the tumour is on the eyelids, surgical excision is not always feasible, and sometimes eyeball excision (removal) has to be recommended.

There is now available, however, a chemotherapy option which has been used that is showing lots of promise.

The chemotherapy agent, Cisplatin, has been around for some time, but it is now available in a slow release gel, which has interesting thermal properties allowing it to be injected into and around the tumours to create a long term effect.

The gel, known as a poloxomer gel, is a liquid when refrigerated, but becomes a gel at body temperature, and will slowly release the Cisplatin over time.

The cost of the procedure will depend on the size and numbers of tumours, and the response – there may need to be repeat injections.

This therapy has been used more on Sarcoids, and they tend to be more locally invasive, and unlikely to have secondary tumours elsewhere.

It has been used less frequently on Squamous cell carcinomas, but certainly is a reasonable option, when the only other alternative would be eye removal. Squamous cell carcinomas tend to be slow to metastasize, but having secondary tumours elsewhere can't be ruled out in long standing cases. This therapy wouldn't treat any remote secondary tumours.

The treatment would involve a general anesthetic, and careful handling of the drug to ensure safety of personal, as any chemotherapy agent is potentially hazardous. If a second treatment is required, a second general anaesthetic would be required.

Due to the cost of the drug and care to be taken with the procedure, in most cases the first treatment would be in the range of \$1000-1500. Depending on whether some drug is saved and can be kept frozen for a second round of treatment, the second treatment may cost around \$400-600. Again, this will depend on the size of the tumours and the size of the patient.

If your horse has some suspicious growths on its eyelids, please call our clinic for an examination and consultation on treatment options, and determining the best course of action.