

Equine Herpes virus

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In news : Due to the outbreak of Equine Herpes Virus, International Equestrian Federation (FEI) announced cancellation of World Cup finals recently. Its outbreak has also disrupted India's lone Tokyo-bound equestrian Fouaad Mirza's Olympic preparations.

What is Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) ?

- It is a virus of the family Herpesviridae that causes abortion, respiratory disease and occasionally neonatal mortality in horses. But it does not affect humans. The virus varies in severity from subclinical to very severe.
- In other words, EHV are DNA viruses that are found in most horses all over the world.
- EHV stands for equine herpes virus. This is a family of viruses which are named by numbers such as EHV 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. There are more viruses in this family, but EHV 1, 3, and 4 pose the most serious health risks for domestic horses.

More about Equine Herpes Virus

- **Names:** Equid alphaherpesvirus 1, formerly Equine herpesvirus 1
- **Spreading:** Most common way- Direct horse-to-horse contact. This virus is shed from infected horses via the respiratory tract or through direct or indirect contact with an infected aborted fetus and fetal membranes.
- **Strains:** Two main strains of EHV-1 have been isolated. D752 strains are correlated to outbreaks associated with neurological disease, whereas outbreaks with non-neurological disease are more closely associated with

strains of N752.

- The disease caused by neurological strains has been named Equine Herpesvirus Myeloencephalopathy or EHM. There is currently no licensed vaccine against EHM and no treatment other than palliative care
- Countries affected: Seven countries have confirmed EHV-1 cases, so far: Spain, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden and Qatar.

Signs & Symptoms:

- It includes things such as decreased coordination, urine dribbling, fever, hind limb weakness, leaning against things to maintain balance, lethargy and the inability to get off the ground.
- More signs of the infection of this virus include depression, anorexia, nasal and ocular discharges.
- Fever is the most common clinical sign of EHV-1, some horses that appear perfectly healthy can still spread the virus from nostril secretions and also from secretions from coughing.

Treatment & Diagnosis

- The present diagnosis for EHV-1 is PCR, polymerase chain reaction, which copies the DNA so one can see if a virus is in the DNA segment.
- PCR can detect the viral load in the DNA, telling if the horse is very infected or below detection levels.
- To get samples for PCR a veterinarian may want to have an uncoagulated blood sample and also a nasal swab

The International Federation for Equestrian sports

- It is the body of equestrian sports.
- The FEI headquarters are in Lausanne, Switzerland. An FEI code of conduct protects the welfare of the horses

from physical abuse or doping