

CASE PRESENTATION OF AUTOTOMY AND SUDDEN DEATH IN A RECENTLY CAPTIVE POPULATION OF DESERTAS SPIDERS (*Hogna ingens*)

Benjamin Kennedy BSc MSc BVetMed MRCVS MRES

Veterinary Pathology Centre, University of Surrey, Guildford, GU2 7AQ,
bkennedy2@rvc.ac.uk

The Desertas wolf spider (*Hogna ingens*) has recently been brought from the wild into a captive breeding program across several zoological collections within the UK and the world (Bushell et al., 2018; Crespo et al., 2014). This species has prominent features and is an ambassador for invertebrate conservation. The understanding and expertise of arachnid pathophysiology and disease is still limited although has significantly improved over the past decade (Pizzi, 2011). A population of captive-bred spiders with a history of sudden death originally attributed to lighting problems experienced additional sudden death with associated autotomy despite resolution of lighting issues. Anaesthesia and clinical examination were performed. Histopathology was used to determine cause of death. Culture and sensitivity was used to direct treatment. Antibiotics and fluid therapy were used to significantly slow progression of disease and alleviate clinical signs. Fungal disease was determined to play a significant factor in the mortality of this population of spiders. Ultimately treatment was able to slow but not prevent death, though significant new data was collected about this currently novel species. The application of veterinary medicine can often be vital in the initial stages of a conservation program as animals are often more susceptible to disease as their husbandry still requires refinement.

References

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