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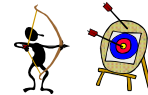
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BACKGROUND

The use of blankets on horses is common today. There is limited information on the physiological response of the horse during recovery concerning thermoregulation with or without a blanket. The information is needed to care for the horse in the best way.



THE AIM

... was to study time to recovery post-exercise in riding horses with the aspect of use of blankets or not during recovery.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

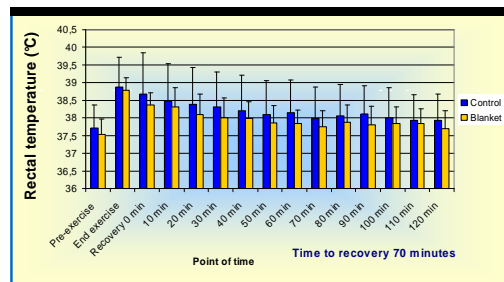
- A cross-over designed pilot study with six clipped riding horses (603 - 642 kg, 6 - 17 years) that carried out a standardised exercise field test (42 minutes) outdoors (0°C) and then monitored during recovery in the stable (6°C) for 120 minutes.
- Heart rate, respiratory rate, rectal temperature and skin surface temperature on neck and on the rump were studied.



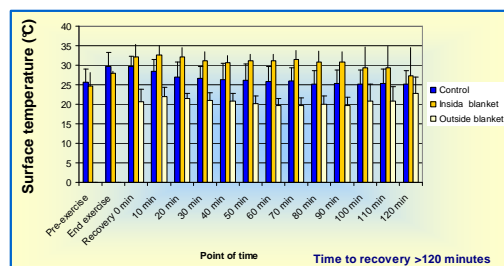
- Treatment (wool blanket) or control (no blanket) was randomised.
- Daily care and exercise were carried out in a standardised system.
- The results were processed with a 3- or 2-way ANOVA followed with a post-hoc t-test where appropriate.

RESULTS

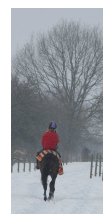
	Pre exercise	End exercise	Time to recovery
Heart rate	41 ± 5 bpm	159 ± 19 bpm	20 min
Respiratory rate	12 ± 4 rpm	61 ± 27 rpm	50 min



The rectal temperature was significantly ($p < 0.04$) higher for control due to higher increase, even though the pattern was similar.



The treatment showed a significantly ($p < 0.001$) higher skin surface temperature under the blanket.



CONCLUSIONS

- We could not detect a notable difference in the time to recovery whether a blanket was used or not during recovery.
- Future studies are needed to answer the question "What is an optimal thermoregulatory recovery for a horse?"



Advice for the care of your horse

- Put a blanket on your horse 20 minutes after exercise to allow some of the heat load to be dissipated before covering your horse.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- To brave and helpful horses and riders!

