A REPORT ON PASTEURELLOSIS IN HIPPOPOTOMUS (*Hippopotomus amphibius*).

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Pasteurellosis is a common infectious disease of domestic ruminants and wild animals caused by gram negative bacteria *Pasteurella multocida*. In domestic ruminants, the customary clinical manifestations include septicemia, pneumonia and bronchitis. Though its occurrence is infrequent in wild animals, epizootics can occur from domestic to wild animals and among wild animals. The disease has been reported in cervids (Damodaran et al 1977), carnivores (Arora, 1988; De Sankar, 1989), elephants (De Alwis and Thambithurai, 1965) and many other groups of mammals.

On the 11th of November 1992, a 21 month old male hippopotamus was found dead in its enclosure. As with most diseases in wildlife, particularly those of a acute or peracute nature, the animal didn't show any symptom of illness prior to death. When the peripheral blood smear examination revealed no evidence of anthrax infection, a detailed postmortem examination was carried out. The lungs were bluish black in colour, liver was enlarged and the intestines had signs of congestion and haemorrhage throughout its course.

Microscopical examination of heart blood smears stained with Gram's and Leishman's stain revealed the presence of bipolar stained short gram negative rods indistinguishable from *Pasteurella* organisms. On culturing the heart blood swab, similar organisms were isolated. Biological test carried out on white mice using the culture also proved positive for pasteurellosis. This is probably the first report of Pasteurella infection in a hippopotamus in India.

Pasteurella multocida is an opportunistically or facultatively pathogenic bacterium with an extensive mammalian and avian host range (Quan *et al* 1986; Rosen, 1981)). Many of these hosts many act as carriers, shedding the organism through their nasal, oral or anal discharges, without showing obvious clinical signs. Pasteurellosis could be an example of an harmless infection that turns into a disease under conditions of stress due to malnutrition, crowding, shipping, pneumonia or other predisposing factors like viral infections.

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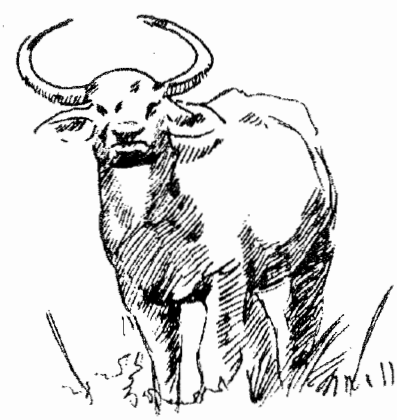
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