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XYLAZINE/KETAMINE COMBINATION FOR SHORT-TERM ANAESTHESIA IN THE HORSE

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A combination of xylazine and ketamine was given to 14 thoroughbreds and 6 hackney ponies in order to obtain short-term anaesthesia in horses. The results obtained are summarized as follows.

1) From preliminary experiments, atropine sulphate (0.01mg/kg) given intravenously (i. v.), follwed 10 minutes later by xylazine (1mg/kg i. v.) and 5 minutes later by another dose of xylazine (1mg/kg i. v.), immediately followed by ketamine (1mg/kg i. v.), was found to be the best method, and induction and recovery from the short-term anaesthesia appeared smooth, safe and excitement-free.

2) Following the first injection of xylazine, good sedation was obtained. The horses lowered their heads, the eyelids and lower lips drooped, the penis prolapsed and the anus loosened.

3) One to 4 minutes after the second injection of xylazine and ketamine, all horses became recumbent without any excitement. Thoroughbreds were recumbent for an average of 24 minutes, and castration was possible during this time. Hackney ponies were recumbent for an average of 10 minutes. All horses were able to stand with one easy effort and then walk to their stables within a few minutes. Most thoroughbreds rolled up on their sternum before standing up.

4) When atropine sulphate (0.01mg/kg) was given intravenously 10 minutes before anaesthesia, no significant changes were observed in heart rate or electrocardiogram during anaesthesia.

5) Little change in hematology was observed, except a transient rise in serum glucose level.