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TITLE

UNDER THE SHADOW OF AFRICAN SWINE FEVER: A COLLECTION OF CASES OF PIGLETS WITH HAEMORRHAGES

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CONTENT

In the last years an increase in cases suspicious of ASF/CSF has been observed in piglets submitted for necropsy at GD Animal Health. Primarily due to extensive haemorrhages, some of these cases were notified to the Dutch authority (NVWA) with subsequent inconveniences for the farmer, veterinarian and authorities. Understanding the causes of these haemorrhages would help to improve the approach in similar cases. For this, a retrospective collection of cases involving piglets with haemorrhages submitted for necropsy at GD Animal Health was performed. Cases from 2014-2018 were included based on keywords “haemorrhagic diathesis” (HD) or “thrombocytopenia purpura” (TP). Adult pigs were excluded. In this period 35 animals (17 submissions) were submitted. The majority of the submissions involved piglets around 2 weeks old. Sudden death, in many cases accompanied by extensive haemorrhages and/or bloody diarrhoea, was the most common clinical sign. Common macroscopic findings were extensive haemorrhages and petechiae in several tissues and organs, marbled lymph nodes and bloody intestinal contents. Extensive haemorrhages and/or platelet disorder (by exclusion) without a known cause were the diagnosis in 63% of the piglets. From the rest, a pathogen was isolated and the diagnosis was septicaemia due to infection with *Streptococcus dysgalactiae* ssp. *equisimilis*, *E. coli*, *S. suis*, *S. aureus*, *S. hyicus* or a combination of them, often together with HD. Bleeding disorders may be caused by damage to the blood vessels by e.g. sepsis, platelet deficiency or dysfunction, derangement of coagulation or a combination of these. In most of the piglets included in this review, no pathogens were identified. Also, when pathogens were isolated, it is not clear if these pathogens were the primary cause of the haemorrhages. These results reflect the need of further diagnostic protocols to find the primary cause of haemorrhages and eventually to ease the approach in those cases.