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SARCOPTES INFESTATION IN TWO MINIATURE PIGS WITH ZONOTIC TRANSMISSION

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Introduction

Scabies is a highly contagious skin disease rarely described in miniature pigs, but with a known potential to affect a variety of different host species, including humans.

Material & Methods

Two 7-month-old male castrated miniature pig siblings were referred to our clinic because both animals had recently developed progressive skin lesions. They had been bought one month before from a specialized breeder, and were housed together in the owner's flat and an outdoor area. On physical examination, both miniature pigs were lethargic and had a cachectic body condition. On dermatological examination, a dull, greasy hair coat with generalized hypotrichosis and multifocal erythema was noted. Importantly, the owner reported that her daughter had recently developed pruritic popular skin lesions on the upper legs.

Results

Microscopic examination of skin scrapings taken from the miniature pigs revealed high numbers of *Sarcoptes* mites in both animals. Subsequently, both miniature pigs were fed on a well-balanced diet, received ivermectin 0.3 mg/kg subcutaneous injections twice within two weeks, and were treated with concomitant therapy. The owner was advised to thoroughly clean the animals' environment. The family's physician confirmed scabies infestation in the owner's child. Both miniature pigs and the child responded well to treatment and went into clinical remission.

Discussion & Conclusion

Nowadays, miniature pigs are exotic but popular pets. Therefore, the number of miniature pigs as veterinary patients is on the increase. Miniature pigs kept as pets can efficiently transmit zoonotic disease to humans, as described for sarcoptic mange in this case report. Furthermore, this animal species may represent a niche for *Sarcoptes scabiei* infestation in countries where sarcoptic mange in commercial pig farms has been eradicated, and could subsequently pose a hazard for specific pathogen free farms.

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