Project Title: Response to Acupuncture in Horses with Chronic Laminitis

Project Summary:
Laminitis is a common problem and major concern for horse owners and veterinarians. Though anecdotal clinical evidence suggests acupuncture is effective and may be a viable alternative treatment, such evidence is mostly circumstantial, and with little support in evidence-based research. This project examines acupuncture’s efficacy in reducing symptomatic pain and suffering (i.e., lameness) in horses with chronic laminitis, using a systematic approach that includes objective data. Fifteen horses which have been diagnosed with chronic (>30 days) laminitis by their veterinarians will be studied. Horses will receive two acupuncture treatments, one week apart; lameness examinations will be performed before, shortly after, the next day, and one week after each treatment (7 times in total). Lameness examinations will be performed following the American Association of Equine Practitioners guidelines, and with an objective and recently-introduced technology (“Lameness Locator”) assisting with the evaluation.

Dr. Kevin May DVM, CVA (El Cajon Valley Veterinary) is a certified veterinary acupuncturist accredited by the International Veterinary Acupuncture Society (IVAS), and will perform the treatments. Dr. Babak Faramarzi DVM, MSc, PhD. (Western University of Health Sciences; College of Veterinary Medicine) specializes in biomechanics and gait analysis, and will be responsible for lameness examinations.

Horses and Incentives:
The researchers will work with the horse veterinarian and the owner or her/his designee. Only horses with a known medical history of chronic laminitis (described for this study as ≥ 30 days of laminitis) will be enrolled in this study. The owner or his/her designee must also agree to and abide by the terms of the study including suspending other laminitis treatments(s) or no changes in current treatment plans of the subject horse during the 2-week period of data gathering. In return for owners’ agreement/assistance and consent to involve their horse(s) in this study the researcher will perform the acupuncture treatments and lameness examinations for free. Additionally, the owners will receive $200 incentive per horse: $50.00 after the first week’s participation, $50.00 after the second week’s participation, and $100.00 after the third week’s participation. Owners will have the right to withdraw at any time; however, the incentive fees are scheduled to encourage full participation. Owners should sign an informed consent form (see attached). The researchers will travel to the farm/clinic to perform the treatments/exams and the owners do not need to relocate the horse.

Please contact Babak Faramarzi (bfaramarzi@westernu.edu; 909.469.5266) With any questions or to enroll in the Study