SUBCUTANEOUS ABSCESS DUE TO *PSEUDOMONAS AERUGINOSA* IN CAPTIVE ASP VIPER (*VIPERA ASPIS*)

Czirják G.Á.¹, L.B. Köbölkuti¹*, A. Kelemen², A. Szakács¹, A. Ungvári¹, D. Cadar¹

¹University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Mănăștur street nr. 3-5, 400372 Cluj Napoca
E-mail: czirjakgabor@yahoo.com, lorandkobolkuti@yahoo.com
²University Babeş-Bolyai, Faculty of Biology-Geology, Clinicilor street nr. 5-7, 400006 Cluj Napoca

*shared first authorship

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**SUMMARY**

Abscesses are one of the most frequent clinical entities of the captive snakes (Hoppmann and Wilson Barron, 2006). In contrast with the mammals, the reptilian purulent material is caseous, forming hard “cheese-like” plugs that are nearly impenetrable to antibiotics, making the key to successful treatment of the reptilian abscesses the complete removal of the abscess cavity and surrounding fibrous capsule (Mader, 2006). Many causes are found for abscesses; foreign bodies embedded, parasites (Mihalca et al., 2007), fungi and bacteria (Köbölkuti and Czirják, unpublished data) can lead to the formation of the exudates.

Bacteria from the genus *Pseudomonas* are part of the normal flora of the oral cavity and intestinal tracts of the snakes (Blaylock, 2001; Köbölkuti and Czirják, unpublished data). Often they are considered opportunistic pathogens, causing different clinical diseases under the stress of the captivity.

A case of subcutaneous abscess was described at a captive asp viper (*Vipera aspis*). During the examination, the snake showed a well localized 3 cm x 1 cm abscess with a central stub-like scar. After the local anesthesia, all the parts of the abscess were surgically removed. *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* was isolated in monoculture from the pus and identified as casual agent of infection. Based on antibiogram we started a treatment using Enrofloxacin generally (10mg/kg i.m.). After 5 days of antibiotic and post-surgical treatment, the recovery of the animal was 100%.

To our knowledge this is the first described case of *Pseudomonas* infection in captive asp viper (*Vipera aspis*).