

Diagnostic and recording accuracy for distal limb fractures in Thoroughbred racehorses in the U.K
*Reardon, R.J.M.¹, Boden, L.¹, Stirk, A.J.² and Parkin, T.D.H.¹, ¹University of Glasgow, School of Veterinary Medicine, United Kingdom, ²British Horseracing Authority, United Kingdom;
richard.reardon@glasgow.ac.uk*

Musculoskeletal injuries have been recognized as the major cause of days lost from training and wastage in Thoroughbred racehorses, whilst limb fractures are the most common cause of euthanasia in racehorses in the United Kingdom (U.K.). Accurate injury diagnosis and recording at the racecourse is essential to ensure correct treatment and provide reliable data for epidemiological studies. Methods to improve the U.K. racecourse veterinary records have been employed, with the introduction of a computerised recording system in 2004. *Post mortems* of all fatal distal limb fractures from U.K. racecourses were performed between 01/02/99 and 31/07/05. During the same period, racetrack veterinary diagnosis was recorded. Different criteria were used to assess racetrack diagnostic accuracy. A comparison was made between the accuracy of diagnosis before and after the introduction of a computerised recording database in January 2004. National Hunt Flat races carried the highest risk of fatal distal limb fracture, whilst flat racing on turf carried the lowest risk, which is similar to previous findings. There were 366 *post mortem* examinations performed in the study period. The percentage of suspect fractures submitted for PM was excellent (97%) and racecourse veterinarian identification of the presence of a fracture was very good (94%). The ability of racecourse veterinarians to accurately identify all fractured bones in the affected limb was poor (53%), with some improvement since the introduction of a computerised recording system. Fracture diagnosis at the racetrack could be improved; either through further training or provision of x-ray units at the racecourse. The quality of data recording has improved since the introduction of a computerised system, but is not yet perfect.