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Antiprotozoal treatment of canine babesiosis

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Abstract

Canine babesiosis is a tick-borne disease caused by several *Babesia* spp. which have different susceptibility to anti-protozoal drugs. A few drugs and drug combinations are used in the treatment of canine babesiosis often without complete parasite elimination leaving treated dogs as carriers which could relapse with clinical disease and also transmit infection further. Although the large form canine babesial species *Babesia canis*, *Babesia vogeli* and *Babesia rossi* are sensitive to the aromatic diamidines imidocarb dipropionate and diminazene aceturate, small form species such as *Babesia gibsoni*, *Babesia conradae* and *Babesia vulpes* (*Theileria annae*) are relatively resistant to these drugs and are treated with the combination of the hydroxynaphthoquinone atovaquone and the antibiotic azithromycin. Azithromycin and other antibiotics that have anti-protozoal properties target the apicoplast, a relict plastid found in protozoa, and exert a delayed death effect. The triple combination of clindamycin, diminazene aceturate and imidocarb dipropionate is also effective against *B. gibsoni* and used to treat atovaquone-resistant strains of this species. Novel

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