

Efficacy of homeopathic and antibiotic treatment strategies in cases of mild and moderate bovine clinical mastitis

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ABSTRACT: The objective of this clinical control trial was to examine the effectiveness of the classical homeopathic treatment strategy in cases of mild and moderate bovine clinical mastitis in comparison with antibiotic and placebo treatments. Owing to characteristics of the selected herds, only cases of clinical mastitis caused by environmental pathogens and clinical cases with negative bacteriological result in the pre-treatment milk sample were included in the trial. A total of 136 lactating dairy cows with 147 affected quarters from four herds in Germany were randomly allocated to three treatment groups. The cows were examined on days 0, 1, 2 and on days 7, 14, 28 and 56 post initial infection to assess clinical signs. Simultaneously, with the exception of days 1 and 2, quarter milk samples for laboratory examinations (bacteriology, somatic cell count) were collected to assess bacteriological and cytological cure rates. On days 28 and 56, treatment strategies did not differ significantly with respect to the clinical outcomes and the total cure rate in cases of bacteriological negative mastitis (n=56). In cases of pathogen-positive mastitis (n=91), the cure rate after 4 and 8 weeks was similar between the two treatment strategies, homeopathy and antibiotic treatment, but the difference between the homeopathic and the placebo treatment at day 56 was significant ($P<0.05$).

The results indicate a therapeutic effect of homeopathic treatment in cases of mild and moderate clinical mastitis.

However, independent of treatment strategy and bacteriological status, the total cure rate was on a low level, revealing limitations in the effectiveness of both antibiotic and homeopathic treatment strategies.