

## **ALTERNATIVE VETERINARY MEDICINE CENTRE**

### **Information Sheet WS010/07**

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### **BOVINE MASTITIS - 1**

#### **Double Blind Placebo-controlled Study**

A visit to a farm that had separated the cows into two groups, completely at random, prompted this clinical trial. It was not a premeditated project. Permission of the farmer was sought and the trial commenced within days, after the design and production of data collection forms and preparation of the medication and ‘placebo’ control.

The results were nothing short of surprising. In an attempt to appraise the veterinary world of this important outcome, the results were submitted to the *Veterinary Record*, as a ‘short communication’, for possible publication. The paper was refused, eventually, with the explanation that the cows had not been randomised by computer. This was despite the previous year’s direct request by the editor for such research from veterinary practice (following on the publication of the ‘short communication’ on stillbirths: [www.alternativevet.org/Clinical%20Trial%20-%20Stillbirths%20Pigs%20WS007-07.pdf](http://www.alternativevet.org/Clinical%20Trial%20-%20Stillbirths%20Pigs%20WS007-07.pdf)) and despite the fact that it was only submitted as a ‘short communication’, not a ‘scientific paper’.

The mastitis work was later published in the *Dairy Farmer* and was the subject of a paper to the congress of the Liga Medicorum Homeopathica Internationalis (LMHI), in Lyon, France, in 1985. It also contributed to the BBC QED programme, in 1991 ‘*Homeopathy, Medicine or Magic*’.

#### **Method & Discussion:**

In this trial, a ‘nosode’ prepared by the AVMC was given, via the drinking water, to the ‘treatment’ group, on a ‘twice weekly’ basis. The control group was ‘treated’ similarly, from a bottle of unmedicated tincture (placebo). The two different bottles were indistinguishable, apart from the coded labelling.

The two different ‘treatments’ were labelled ‘A’ & ‘B’, with the allocation being ‘blind’ and the breakdown of the code being stored in a safe until the end of the trial.

It was left to the farm management team to treat cases in the usual way, with antibiotic tubes. The number of tubes used was recorded. The ‘duration’ was taken as up to clinical clearance of signs.

Unfortunately, owing to a misunderstanding, cell count data were not collected separately, for the two groups. Nonetheless, the data showed an effect.

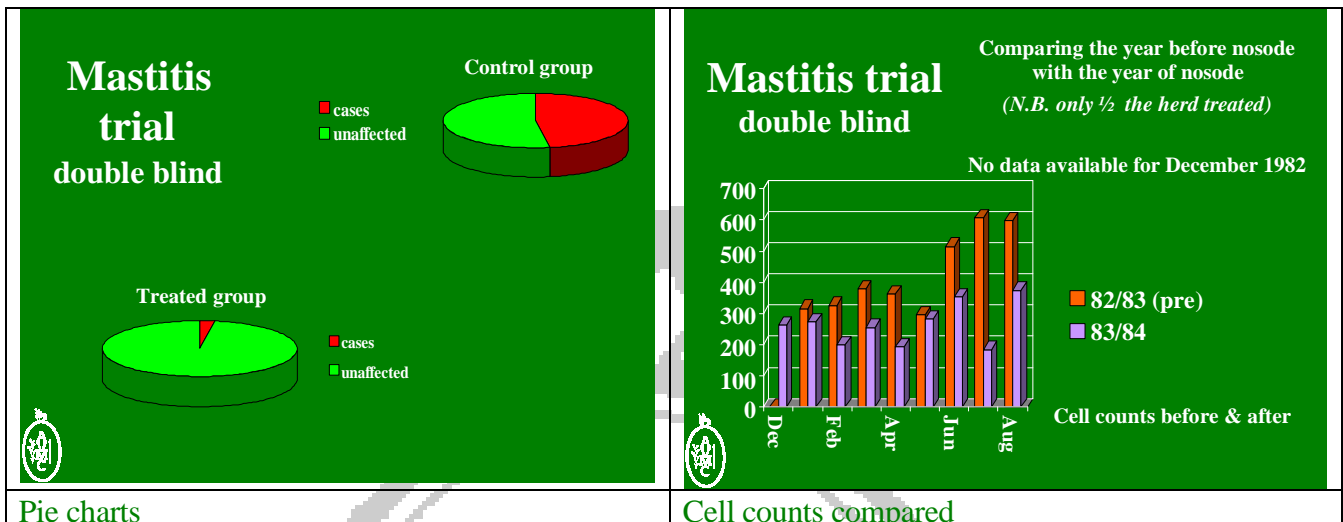
**Results:**

| Parameter                     | Control Group | Treatment Group |
|-------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| No. of cows in group          | 41            | 41              |
| No. of mastitis cases         | 19            | 1               |
| No. of cows affected          | 10            | 1               |
| Ave. no. quarters affected    | 1.16          | 1               |
| Ave. severity (range 1 – 3)   | 2.16          | 1               |
| Ave. duration of cases (days) | 4.5           | 4               |
| % of group affected           | 47.5% (25%)*  | 2.5%            |

\*In the last row of data, the bracketed figure refers to the number of affected cows as a % of the group; the non-bracketed figure to the number of cases, as a % of the group.

The results, including cell count data, are presented graphically below:





These charts have also been prepared as a slide show: [www.alternativevet.org/website\\_mastitis\\_display\\_05.07.ppt](http://www.alternativevet.org/website_mastitis_display_05.07.ppt)

### Discussion:

The results were surprising. We have tried to repeat this work, by mixing treated cows and 'control' cows in the same pen. This method, while supposedly being statistically advantageous, has failed, leading to the postulate that homeopathic treatment will 'spread' among a group (see 'research discussion paper':

[www.alternativevet.org/Research%20Discussion%20Paper%20WS012-07.pdf](http://www.alternativevet.org/Research%20Discussion%20Paper%20WS012-07.pdf)).

Despite the replication difficulties, clinical usage of this particular nosode, in milking herds, has yielded very pleasing results, over many years.

Clinical trial work carried out by Christopher Day MRCVS

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