

NOCARDIOSIS IN A STRIPED DOLPHIN (*Stenella coeruleoalba*)

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Infection by *Nocardia* sp. in different odontocete species have been previously reported. We describe a case of systemic infection with primary lung involvement in *Stenella coeruleoalba*.

Necrotic piogenic pneumonia and lymphadenitis with severe traqueobronchitis was diagnosed in an adult female Mediterranean striped dolphin (188 cm length) found stranded. When opening the left hemithorax, about 750 ml of bloody liquid with fibrinous floculations adhered to the pleura was collected from the pleural cavity. Both lungs presented a granulomatous pneumonia with large whitish consolidated areas. The necrotic fibrinous lesions affected also the mucosae of the lower airways including the larynx. Presence of brownish liquid was noted in the bronchial tree. All the thoracic lymph nodes were severely affected too. Some necrotic foci were found in many other organs, including other lymph nodes, spleen, heart, brain, and thyroid.

Samples of the affected organs were processed for histopathology revealing generalized necrotic piogranulomatous lesions. Many filamentous bacteria present in the foci were positive with the gram staining and faintly positive with the Ziehl-Neelsen staining. Swabs were taken from pleural liquids and lesions and cultured for microbiology.

Systemic infection by *Nocardia* sp. was diagnosed. The cause of death was believed to be the gravity of the necrotic inflammatory pulmonary lesions, as well as the obstructive traqueobronchial exudation.