

9 Summary

In this study we represent the knowledge about the horse's colic from the first antique descriptions up to the present time. For such studies a schedule in historic periods has been proved useful, because there exist four great stages in the history of human and veterinarian medicine: the antiquity as an era of rational-empiric animal therapeutics, the Middle Ages as a metaphysical era, the modern times until the nineteenth century as the beginning of a scientific reflection and the present time as an era of an etiologic concept and consciousness. To facilitate the comprehension the important political-territorial, scientific and cultural developments are described briefly. Concerning the colic of the horse the actual knowledge about its etiology and about the different causing diseases as well as the therapeutics are shown.

In the antiquity first signs of trials are visible to distinguish different forms of colic and to develop empiric therapeutics. In the Middle Ages the improvements stagnated influenced by the migration of nations, the building of towns and religious wars. But especially since the invention of typography the actual knowledge spread out in form of popular booklets („Rossarzneibücher“). The therapy and prophylaxis of diseases was dependent on superstitious concepts. A rational-empiric thinking was again introduced in the period of the masters of the horses.

The chapter about the modern times interpretes the beginning of a scientific vision in medicine, according to the political-territorial development. Improvement in the human medicine as the detection of the blood circulation and the start of the histologic science since the introduction of the microscope deepened the medical knowledge, but also shows a significant backwardness of veterinarian science, being practised by specialized laymen.

The building of the first veterinary schools since the end of the 18th century led to the development of a veterinary profession which searched etiologic concepts of our domestic animals' diseases.

The industrial revolution and the growing mechanization with abundant new communication skills released dramatic advancements in all scientific disciplines including the medicine.

Regarding the colic the etiologic causes were described systematically and concepts to a methodical proceeding were developed. The introduction of anesthesia and aseptis/antisepsis encouraged to treat a colic horse surgically.

Finally the modern knowledge about the causes of the horse's colic and its conservative and surgical therapy is overviewed.