

Comparison of lithium dilution and thermodilution cardiac output measurements in anaesthetised neonatal foals

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Knowledge of cardiac output is expected to help guide the treatment of hypotension associated with critical illness and/or anaesthesia in neonatal foals. However, a practical and safe method of measuring cardiac output has not been described for the foal. Lithium dilution, a new method of cardiac output determination not requiring cardiac catheterisation, has recently been reported in mature horses. We compared this method to thermodilution in isoflurane-anaesthetised foals age 30-42 h and found good agreement between the 2 methods in a range of cardiac outputs 5.4-20.4 l/min. The lithium dilution technique is a practical and reliable method of measuring cardiac output in anaesthetised neonatal foals, and warrants investigation in critically ill conscious foals.