

## Results of a One Year Candida Desensitization Treatment in a *Tursiops truncatus*

IAAAM 1996

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In the Brugge dolphinarium, Belgium, a 20-year old female *Tursiops truncatus* had the habit of "splashing" herself quite hard against the surface of the water. This behavior had been going on for several years, and the episodes could last for hours with "splashing" every 30 seconds.

Complete physical and blood exams had been performed many times but the results were always normal. The only thing to be found is every now and then the presence of *candida albicans* in the blowhole, but less than what is being found in the other animals. Many different treatments were given but without results, apart from corticoids.

Eventually it was found out that the animal was allergic to *candida*.

The technique used for this test was developed at the Centre the Biologie Republique, in France. It is based on human basophiles degranulation that is sensitized on a particular allergen after having been activated by the serum of one species. It seemed that the system also worked for dolphins.

An oral desensitization, based on regular sub-lingual administration of increasing concentration of *candida* had been proposed. After a few months of treatment, the animal did stop those "splashing" behaviors.

Blood has been taken from the animal every month since the beginning of the treatment in March 1995. She is still under treatment. This paper concentrates on the interpretation and the evolution of those monthly results, in relation with the animal's behavior.

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