



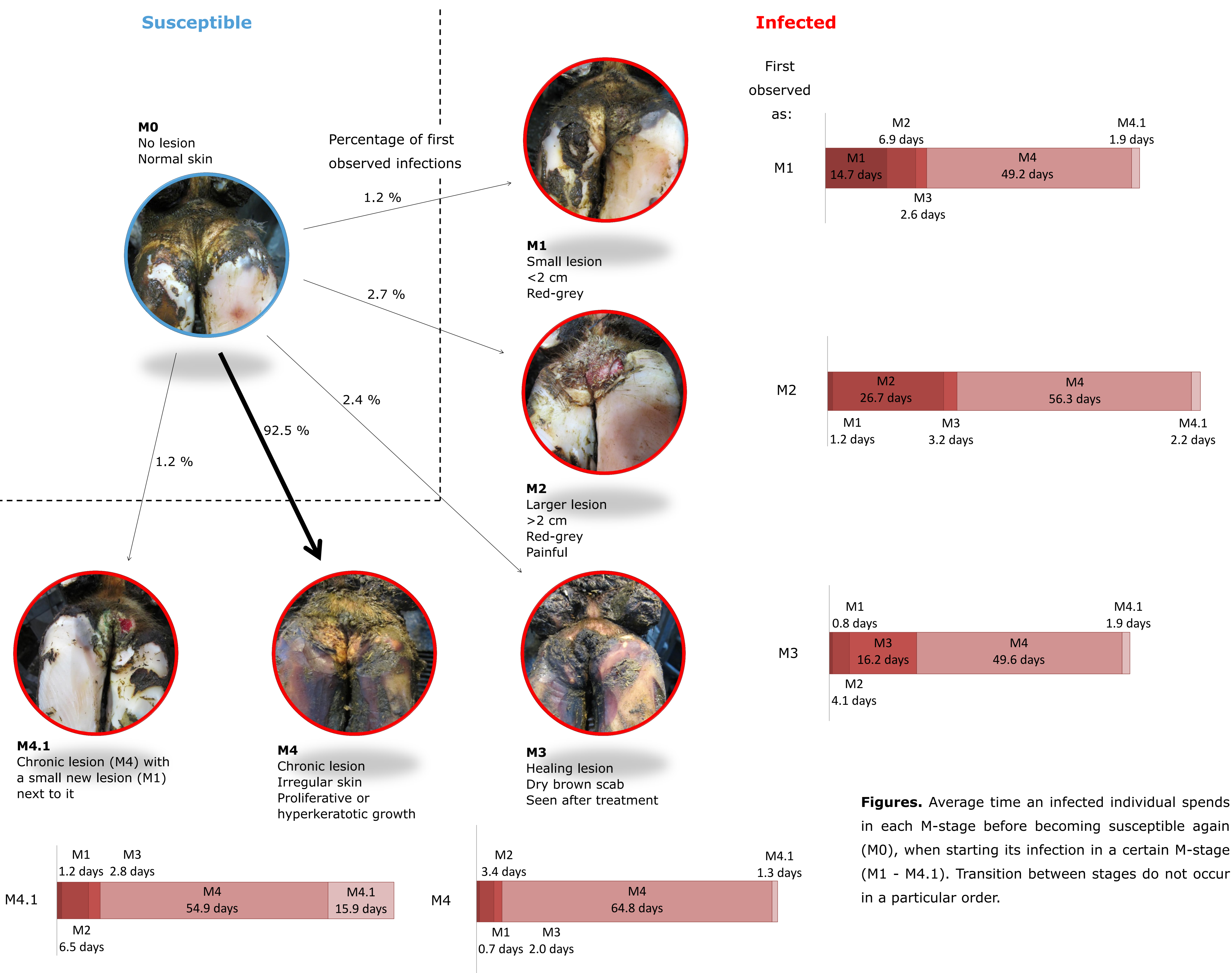
Digital Dermatitis in dairy cattle: how infectious is it?

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Background

Digital Dermatitis (DD) is an infectious claw disease causing ulcerative lesions mainly on the hind claws of dairy cattle. Red round ulcers can be seen above the interdigital space next to the heel bulbs. DD can be painful and is associated with lameness. DD lesions can be classified into different M-stages (M0 – M4.1) (Döpfer *et al.*, 1997). The M0-stage is the susceptible stage, all other stages are infectious.



Figures. Average time an infected individual spends in each M-stage before becoming susceptible again (M0), when starting its infection in a certain M-stage (M1 - M4.1). Transition between stages do not occur in a particular order.

Conclusions

92.5% of the DD infections is first observed as a chronic lesion (M4), the remaining 7.5% of the DD infections is first observed as another lesion (M1, M2, M3 or M4.1). These lesion will become an M4-lesion as well and stay M4 for a relatively long time. So, infected animals have an M4-lesion the majority of the time. During the whole period that animals are infected, they are infectious to other animals in the group. Since M4-lesions are predominant during this infectious period, regardless of the first observed lesion, focus should be on this lesion stage when lowering DD prevalence.

Contact

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Reference

Döpfer, D., ter Huurne, A., Cornelisse, J., Van Asten, A., Koopmans, A., Meijer, F., Schukken, Y., Szakall, I., Klee, W. and Bosma, R. (1997) 'Histological and bacteriological evaluation of digital dermatitis in cattle, with special reference to spirochaetes and *Campylobacter faecalis*', *Veterinary Record*, 140(24), 620-623.

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