

The efficacy of L-Mesitran Medical Grade Honey for wound care in rhinos was supported by a prospective case series

South Africa is home to some of the world's most endangered wildlife, with the White rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*) among its most threatened species due to its highly sought-after horn. The number of poached rhinos is dropping over the years, attributed to raising awareness of this problem, preventive removal of the horns, international ban on horn trading and trafficking, fighting corruption, strict government measures, efforts in arresting poachers, and travel restrictions due to Covid. However, because the poaching and natural mortality rates due to drought outpaced the birth of new rhinos, less rhinos are alive and this makes it harder for poachers to locate their prey.

Since rhinos are left for dead after the poaching incidents, it is of utmost importance to save the survivors. The wounds that arise following poaching differ in severity and location, depending on the poachers using guns or dart tranquilizers, and the different methods of removing the horns, with either chainsaws, machetes, hatchets, or saws. Conservationists and veterinarians are among those on the frontline dealing with these injured animals on a day-to-day basis, and therefore it is important to optimize treatment options and improve wound care. Since an evidence-based wound care protocol is lacking for treating these majestic animals, more information on potent wound care protocols is urgently warranted.

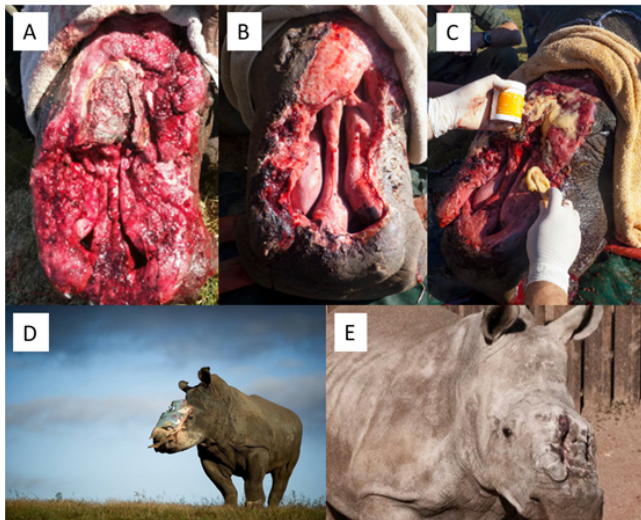


Fig. 1. The Rhino “Hope” with a severe and infected wound covering a large part of her head. A). Start of the wound treatment with L-Mesitran Soft B). The wound after four months of treatment with L-Mesitran. C). Example of L-Mesitran application. D). There is “Hope” for severely wounded rhinos. E). Hope almost fully recovered from the wounds and died 18 months after the poaching event due to an unrelated intestinal infection.

Unfortunately, not much data exists on wound care in rhinos, due to the difficulties to treat them without immobilization and to follow-up. A simple wound care product that holds long-lasting antimicrobial and healing activity is therefore warranted. Medical grade honey (MGH) follows strict criteria to guarantee safety, quality, and efficacy. The role of MGH in wound healing is binary and based on the antimicrobial and healing properties.

In this -first of its kind- study published in the journal "Veterinary and Animal Science", the efficacy of L-Mesitran MGH for wound care in rhinos was supported by a prospective case series of seven wounds of different etiologies and severity. Four wounds were around the horns and three on the limbs. It was a challenge to take care and follow-up the wounds of these wild animals in their natural habitat. A well-balanced decision between the need of treatment and risk of immobilization is constantly evaluated.

In the presented cases, MGH proved a novel tool with minimal intervention and maximal effectiveness (Fig. 1). With the severity of the wounds taken into consideration, there was a rapid healing in all cases, while infection resolved when present. MGH creates a moist and anti-inflammatory wound environment, while promoting almost all aspects in the wound healing processes, such as autolytic debridement, angiogenesis and re-epithelialization.

The efficacy of L-Mesitran has constantly been confirmed in other cases and literature as well and forms a potent therapy for treating wounded rhinos. The strong antimicrobial and healing properties make it an easy and versatile product that can be used in all kinds of wounds. The paper contains important information for wildlife and zoo vets and helps to conserve wildlife.

Dr. Marais is one of the few wildlife vets in South Africa who is performing these treatments. He also runs the non-profit organization called "Saving The Survivors" which attends to injured endangered wildlife that have fallen victim to poaching or traumatic incidents.

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Publication

[Medical grade honey: Hope for wounded white rhinos](#)

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Vet Anim Sci. 2021 Aug 18