Wild Tiger Health Centre Information Sheet

Disease threat: Isospora felis

Hazard description: An intestinal coccidian parasite. The oocyst contains two sporocysts, each with four sporozoites.

Host species: Direct life cycle. Host species are felids.

Pathogenesis: It is generally considered non-pathogenic in free-living wild animals, but disease may occur with intensive housing, overcrowding, poor hygiene, stress etc. associated with captivity, and/or overcrowding associated with habitat loss or perturbation (Duszynski & Upton 2001). In particular, heavy burdens in young captives may be associated with diarrhoea/enteritis (Arvind 2001; Dubey & Jardine 2008). Immunity following natural exposure is age-related (Duszynski & Upton 2001).

Diagnosis: Faecal examination, characteristic oocysts.

Vaccination: None.

Free-ranging tiger occurrence: Reported at necropsy of free-ranging tiger in Panna Tiger Reserve, India (Nigam *et al.* 2016). Commonly reported from other free-ranging wild felids (Berentsen *et al.* 2012; Mandal & Choudhury 1983; Patton & Rabinowitz 1994; Smith & Kok 2006; Bjork *et al.* 2000), but no reports of confirmed disease were found. Reported from captive tigers (Hou *et al.* 2008; Mahali *et al.* 2010).

Distribution: Presumed worldwide (Taylor *et al.* 2007).

Assumptions: Low pathogenicity in otherwise healthy uncompromised individuals.

Limitations: None.

Vaccination: None.