Transmission of African swine fever virus from infected pigs by direct contact and aerosol routes - DTU Orbit (10/08/2019)

Transmission of African swine fever virus from infected pigs by direct contact and aerosol routes

In 2014, African swine fever virus (ASFV) was introduced into the Baltic states and Poland. Since then, the disease has continued to spread within these regions, and recently, cases were reported in the Czech Republic and Romania. Currently, there is an increasing risk of ASFV introduction into Western Europe. Hence, there is an urgent need to assess current contingency plans. For this purpose, knowledge of modes-of-transmission and clinical outcome in pigs infected with new European ASFV strains is needed. In the present study, two experiments were conducted in pigs using an isolate of ASFV from Poland (designated here POL/2015/Podlaskie/Lindholm). In both studies, pigs were inoculated intranasally with the virus and contact pigs were exposed to the experimentally infected pigs, either directly (contact within and between pens) or by air. Pigs exposed to the virus by intranasal inoculation, by direct contact to infected animals and by aerosol developed acute disease characterized by viremia, fever and depression. Infectious virus was first detected in blood obtained from the inoculated pigs and then sequentially among the within-pen, between-pen and air-contact pigs. ASFV DNA and occasionally infectious virus was found in nasal-, oral-, and rectal swabs obtained from the pigs, and ASFV DNA was detected in air samples. No anti-ASFV antibodies were detected in sera. In conclusion, the study shows that the currently circulating strain of ASFV can be efficiently transmitted via direct contact and by aerosols. Also, the results provide quantitative transmission parameters and knowledge of infection stages in pigs infected with this ASFV.

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