


**RENAL FAILURE FOLLOWING RUSSELL'S VIPER  
BITES SEEN IN SRI LANKA - AN IMMUNE  
MECHANISM**

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The onset of renal failure in 21 out of 90 patients who had been given antivenom was seen after a week of the bite by the snake. 10 of these 21 patients were tested for antibodies against horse serum and snakevenom, and antibodies were detected against horse serum alone. Post mortem



studies of the kidneys showed an acute inflammatory reaction similar to that seen in post streptococcal glomerulonephritis. Deposits of substances similar to antigen-antibody complexes were found within the lumen of the blood vessels. Rats injected with horse serum also showed a similar reaction.

In both patients and rats it would appear that antigen-antibody complexes are deposited in the kidneys causing renal failure. It is advisable that every patient given antivenom be kept under observation at least for a period of two weeks.