Tetanus in a Dog

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Tetanus is rare in dogs and cats, compared with many other domestic species and humans, because of a relative inability of the toxin to penetrate and bind to nervous tissue in these species (Acke et al., 2004; Greene, 2006). Dogs are 600 times more resistant to tetanus than horses (Greene, loc. cit). The present paper discusses about the generalized tetanus in a Crossbred dog.

Case History and Observations

Eight months old, uncastrated, crossbred male dog weighing 14 kg was brought to Madras Veterinary College Teaching Hospital with the history of rigidity of all the limbs and tonic spasms since that morning. Clinical signs like erected ears, outstretched tail, severe extensor rigidity of all the four limbs, opisthotonus and titanic spasms throughout the body were noticed. The dog was hypersensitive to external stimuli and titanic muscle spasms could be induced by sudden noises or movements. Attempts to flex the limbs were not successful. On physical examination mild elevation of rectal temperature (103.6°F), tachypnea (more than 50 breaths per min) and tachycardia were noticed. Hematological findings included mild anemia (Hemoglobin of 9.7 g/dl, Packed cell volume of 31% and Total erythrocyte count of 5.01 million cells per cumm) and moderate neutrophilia (16.7 x 10^3 cells/µl). Serum biochemical parameters were within normal reference ranges. On thorough physical examination the wound could not be located. Based on the history and clinical findings a diagnosis of tetanus was made.

Treatment and Discussion

Treatment was initiated with Ampicillin and Cloxacillin combination @ 25 mg/kg bw i/v, q 8h and diazepam @ 0.5 mg/kg bw i/v as needed for muscle relaxation. Meloxicam was administered for analgesia @ 0.1 mg/kg bw i/m, q 24h. Ringer's lactate was administered @ 10 ml/kg bw i/v as supportive therapy. Owner was advised to keep the dog in a well-padded kennel, in a dark, quiet area. Since the dog was unable to eat, owner was advised to feed soft food like gruel. Despite the treatment, dog collapsed on second day of post-treatment.

Fig. Characteristic features of tetanus like extended limbs, opisthotonus and erected ears.

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*Clostridium tetani* spores are ubiquitous in nature and are not harmful until inoculated into an anaerobic medium like wound where sporulation occurs and toxin production begins (Million, 1997). Tetanus in dogs and cats is most commonly associated with a contaminated wound, but often a wound is not found due to the long incubation period in small animals (Greene, *loc. cit*). Unsuccessful outcome of the present case might be attributed to the fatal nature of generalized tetanus. Million (*loc. cit*) and Greene (*loc. cit*), opined that cases of generalized tetanus had poor prognosis.

References


Surgical Management of an Uncommon Liposarcoma in a Bitch

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Liposarcomas are rare malignant tumors of adipose tissue that develop primarily in older dogs (Goldschmidt *et al.*, 2000). They are considered as soft tissue neoplasms because of their mesenchymal or connective tissue cell origin (Daugaard, 2004). They often arise from extremities and retropropitoneum (Peterson *et al.*, 2003). In the present report an unusual case of liposarcoma in a bitch and its successful surgical management are placed on record.

Case History and Observations

A 10 years old Lhasapso bitch was referred with the history of having a growth in the right leg and the animal showed limping while walking. Anamnesis revealed that the growth was persistent since 2½ months which gradually increased in size. There was no apparent discomfort and the animal maintained its normal gait till 7 days before the presentation. Clinical examination revealed presence of a large hard mass in the posterior aspect of the right hock region. The growth disturbed the gait of the animal and the animal showed discomfort while lying down and getting up due to the growth. The growth was solitary, well circumscribed, round, firm and freely movable. Heart rate, respiratory rate and rectal temperature were within the normal physiological limits. The thoracic radiographs showed no evidence of pulmonary metastases. Based on the history, clinical and radiological examination the case was tentatively diagnosed as tumor and the animal was prepared for aseptic surgical correction.

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