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WELCOME!

Welcome to the December 2002 edition of VetCom. *In the Trenches* this month provides a discussion of diagnosis and treatment of canine hemangiosarcoma, an often insidious, and ultimately fatal disease. The article generously provided by Dr. Alice Villalobos, is dedicated to a cherished chocolate Labrador, Chloe, who just recently lost her battle with the disease. Dr Villalobos is a pioneer in veterinary clinical oncology and built the first private radiation facility for pets at the Animal Cancer Center in southern California.



Alice Villalobos

In the Trenches

Alice Villalobos, DVM

BIG SPLEENS are BIG PROBLEMS

There are over 40 different conditions of the spleen which may affect health. The spleen is a large, long, finger-like organ in the left side of the abdomen that stores blood. New blood cells may form in the spleen (hematopoiesis) while it routinely filters out old blood cells. The spleen also helps to maintain immunity and resistance to infections.

Pets develop most of their splenic problems at an older age. The spleen may enlarge (splenomegaly) in dogs, especially Cocker, that are suffering from immune mediated hemolytic anemia. The body destroys its own

Guerilla Marketing's Golden Rule #17 *Be sure your timing is on; the right marketing to the right people is only right when the timing is right.*

All time is not created equal. Some times are far more propitious to your success than other times.

Consider the following:

Do your marketing when your competitors have eased up...during *slow months*

In every recession /depression, some businesses prosper

(note: during the 2001 holiday season, the newswire reported: *An unprecedented rise in pet adoptions this winter is being partially credited to people looking for comfort in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks.*)



red blood cells because it has developed antibodies against the red cell membrane. The spleen then captures the huge numbers of damaged red blood cells causing it to swell. The spleen may also enlarge if it starts making new red cells (extramedullary hematopoiesis) in response to several disease conditions.

Most splenic problems in older dogs are the result of tumors. Some of the tumors that develop in the spleen form nodules. Some nodules remain deep in the splenic tissue while others may get very large and cause the capsule of the spleen to stretch and finally rupture and bleed.

Following activity, playing and jumping, the capsule may tear open or the delicate tumor tears away under the capsule.

Deal quickly with client requests and complaints.

Take your time developing marketing/educational materials. Aim for quality and economy.

Perfect timing is the result of Perfect Planning

Guerilla Marketing Excellence, Levine, Houghton Mifflin Co

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the VetCom readers and VetScan customers for your continued dedication to the care and well being of beloved pets.

All of us at Abaxis, wish you a wonderful holiday season!

Bleeding may subsequently occur under the capsule or freely into the abdomen. Unchecked, the dog will bleed out internally, collapse and may die. Some dogs are able to survive subcapsular and small bleeds. A clot may form and the blood in the abdomen may return to the circulation by being reabsorbed. During this time, the dog is very weak and will stay quiet and not move around for several days.

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The early warning signs of splenic tumors in pets are easy to overlook. Pets with splenomegaly are less active and have less energy. The lips and tongue may appear very pale due to a low red blood cell count (anemia). In advanced stages of splenomegaly the abdomen appears, pendulous, distended or bloated as if the pet were pregnant. Other biochemistry indications may appear as elevation of the liver enzymes including ALP (SAP) and ALT if there has been metastases to the liver.

Big dogs, especially German Shepherds, are at greatest risk for developing malignant splenic cancer known as hemangiosarcoma (blood vessel cancer). Hemangiosarcoma is a good reason to have German Shepherds over six years of age examined by ultrasound every six months.

Older dogs are commonly affected with benign splenic tumors called hyperplastic nodules. Ultrasound of the abdomen is helpful to distinguish between benign nodules versus hemangiosarcoma. Cats occasionally develop

splenomegaly due to massive infiltration by rapidly dividing mast cells. The warning signs in cats with splenomegaly include vomiting and lethargy.

Splenectomy generally returns the cat to a state of well being that may last as long as four years with medication.

Thank goodness the spleen can be removed (in pets and people). While the spleen is part of the immune system, and a useful organ when healthy, it is not essential to life. Emergency clinics all over the world are familiar with the scenario of a large breed dog rushed to the hospital after sudden collapse. Emergency surgery to remove a bleeding spleen can save the pet's immediate life.

The attending veterinarian will evaluate blood tests and radiographs of the chest and abdomen. Ultrasound of the abdomen and heart to determine the extent of the condition is recommended. Exploratory laparotomy and splenectomy usually provides dramatic results. Profuse bleeding can be controlled by removal of the spleen. It is not unusual that the pet will need a transfusion during surgery in order to recover. If the patient has no

metastatic lesions or problems in the other organs, a rapid recovery to good clinical health comes quite quickly.

80% of ruptured spleens in dogs however, are found on histopathology to contain malignant cancer cells of blood vessel origin (hemangiosarcoma). Dogs with this diagnosis have a poor prognosis for long-term survival. The good news is that generally, the average dog lives four months of good quality life after the spleen is removed even when it is positive for cancer! The bad news is that, if it is cancer, unfortunately, most dogs don't survive past six months without treatment because it spreads to the lungs and liver. Periodic follow-up x-rays and ultrasound studies of the chest and abdomen help monitor metastases.

We may be able to extend life with treatments such as the VAC chemotherapy protocol or carboplatin (given by a veterinarian who specializes in cancer care). Some reports find that 40% of patients receiving chemotherapy may survive one year with treatment.

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Coming Conferences

We'll See You There!

American Association of Equine Practitioners

Orlando, FL
Dec 5-7

Chicago VMA

Chicago, IL
Dec 11

Events of Note

The holiday season brings us plentiful opportunity to celebrate and give thanks.

May you enjoy all the warmth and festivities of the season!

We look forward to a wonderful New Year in 2003, and hope to see you at one of our educational events, local or regional veterinary meetings.

Colorado State University Veterinary Conference

Fort Collins, CO
Jan 11-13

North American Veterinary Conference

Orlando, FL
Jan 18-22

Missouri VMA

Osage Beach, MO
Jan 17-19

Michigan Veterinary Conference

Lansing, MI
Jan 23-26

Local Abaxis Representatives are available to present a one-hour presentation on the topic of in-clinic wellness programs and diagnostic testing for local veterinary meetings.

To request a speaker at your event, please contact your local representative (contact information available at: www.abaxis.com), or: pamconboy@abaxis.com

The program offers a review of veterinarian approaches to wellness and senior testing, published relevant literature and 1 hour of RACE continuing education credit

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**Abaxis Expands in the
Western United States**

Abaxis is undergoing expansion
in the western U.S. in order to
better serve our customers. We
have recently added a third west
coast-based Area Sales Director
and are in the process of
expanding our Regional Sales
Manager staff across the
country.

In Your Opinion

From our last query regarding
Complete Blood Counts:

*90% believed an automated
5-part WBC differential would
be clinically useful to them.*

**Abaxis Contact
Information**

1-800-822-2947

VetCom Issues

*subscribe, unsubscribe
questions, comments*
Pam Conboy, ext. 6604
pamconboy@abaxis.com

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for Equine
Practitioners
in Orlando**

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**December's Question:
In Your Opinion,**

*What diagnostic tools do you
currently rely on for differentiation
between canine pulmonary &
cardiac disease?*

*If a simple blood test were available
to confirm congestive heart failure,
would you employ it in your clinic?*

Technical Service EXT 2
*technical issues, training
rotor credits, software queries*
Linda Lang, Manager

Customer Service EXT 3
*direct orders, local representative
and VetScan distributor information*
Valerie Campbell, Manager

**Abaxis Supports
The Oasis Sanctuary**

With the introduction of the
VetScan Avian-Reptilian rotor,
practitioners are now easily able
to gather comprehensive
diagnostic results for their
patients from just a few drops of
blood. Abaxis recently donated a
VetScan for use at The Oasis
Sanctuary, a non-profit, Rescue &
Retirement facility for exotic
birds in Arizona. To find out
more about them visit:

www.the-oasis.org

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SALES

Eastern Area Sales Director
Marty Mulroy, ext. 1500

Central Area Sales Director
Randy Knick, ext. 1509

Western Area Sales Director
John Barone, ext. 1578

**Comprehensive Diagnostic Profile
with sodium**
additional diagnostic information at no additional cost

Authorized VetScan® Distributors

<u>Distributor</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
AVSC-American Veterinary Supply	800-869-2510
Barber	800-552-5698
DVM Resources	877-828-1026
Great Western Animal Health Supply	505-822-0999
IVESCO-Iowa Veterinary Supply	800 831-4828
Merritt	800-845-0411
Miller Veterinary Supply	800-880-1920
Nelson	800-843-3322
Penn Vet	800 233-0210
RJ Marketing	800-406-8541
TW Medical	888 787-4483
VMS-Veterinary Medical Supply	800-533-8674
Vetpo	800-253-7280
Western Medical Supply	800-242-4415



I have been working with researchers from UCLA who are studying the role fatty acids such as linoleic and linolenic acid play in the fight against cancer. When added to the food or given by injection, certain metabolic pathways (arachidonic) are affected that may increase the body's ability to shrink tumors and kill cancer cells.

As an alternative or an adjunct to chemotherapy, fatty acids such as those found in safflower oil, lecithin granules, primrose oil and flaxseed oil may help fight hemangiosarcoma.

In addition, I also send patients home on Inositol Hexaphosphate, Beta Glucan, Ambrotose and Platinum Performance with trace minerals. I like to refer to these natural supplements as "immuno-nutrition." Along with Hill's N/D Diet, veterinarians may help support the pet's overall nutritional status and support the pet's immune system. Hill's N/D is strategically formulated to starve the cancer cells while it provides calories and nutrition with omega 3 fatty acids and amino acids to help pets fight their cancer.

These supplements have action against cancer by altering the cell to cell communication mechanisms that regulate or inhibit cancer growth. These supplements can be easily given to pets as chemoprevention agents.

These products are called nutraceuticals and are backed by the American

Neutraceutical Association. They have been shown to support the immune system and inhibit the growth of unwanted cancer cells in the body. They also are reported to help people and pets handle the chemotherapy and radiation therapy with improved blood values and less hair loss.

CASE STUDY:

The odds seemed to be against 19 year old Marty, The family's favorite Collie, in rapid decline from loss of blood. But despite his advanced age, Marty was a good candidate for surgery. The abdominal ultrasound showed no lesions in his liver, his chest x-rays were normal and his blood tests on a comprehensive panel were all within normal limits except for the obvious blood loss anemia (PCV=27%). An ultrasound of Marty's heart revealed no tumors inside the heart and no fluid build-up in the sac around the heart (pericardium). Marty's family clung to the 20% chance that the tumor was not malignant, and in fact, his case had the best possible outcome. His spleen was bleeding due to a benign nodular tumor. Marty is now 21 years old!

The symptoms of ruptured splenic tumor range from subtle lethargy and weakness at onset to sudden collapse. When observing these signs, particularly in an older otherwise healthy animal, the pet's human family must be prepared to act. With a confirmed diagnosis, emergency surgery can be lifesaving.

Resources

for additional information on hemangiosarcoma, and other companion animal cancers

Animal Oncology
Consultation Service
310-379-8440

www.cancerlinks.com/animplas.html

www.vetcancersociety.org

www.vetcancerregistry.com