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Successful management of limber tail syndrome in Labrador dog: First case report in India

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Abstract

Three year old Labrador female was presented to the Veterinary Clinical Complex, College of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry, Anand Agricultural University, Anand, Gujarat with history of sudden onset of staggering gait and dropping of tail. On the basis of history and clinical findings case was diagnosed as a Limber Tail Syndrome. The dog was treated with Inj. Meloxicam@ 0.2 mg/kg along with injectable neuro vitamins intramuscularly. The owner advised to keep the dog in warm environment with complete rest. On next day the dog was presented with normal locomotion and tail movement recovered uneventful.

Keywords: Limber tail, dogs, management

Introduction

Limber tail is also known as other terms such as limp tail, water tail, swimmer tail, frozen tail and cold tail common in Pointers and Labrador Retrievers but the disease also occurs in other and in both sexes^[3]. Limber tail syndrome is characterized by hanging of the tail from its base or strutting out dorsally appear as broken tail and exact aetiology is not clear and induced by too cold or too hot weather^[1]. The clinical literature on this condition is very meagre. This paper presents a very rare condition “Limber tail syndrome” in a Labrador dog and reported first time In India through this paper.

Case History and Clinical Examinations

A three year old Labrador female dog weighing 28 kg was presented to the Veterinary Clinical Complex, College of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry, Anand Agricultural University, Anand, Gujarat with history of sudden onset of staggering gait and dropping of tail (Fig. 1). The detailed anamnesis revealed owner kept dog under air conditioned room initial after bathing and observed dropping tail every time after bathing. On Clinical examinations animal appear alert while neurological examinations revealed, pedal and patellar reflexes were positive but tail pinch reflex was found negative. During walk animal shows mild in coordination of both hind limbs. The physiological parameters revealed rectal temperature 102.4 °F, heart rates 92/min and respiration rates 22/min. The haematological parameters presented Table 1 which revealed within normal limit. The blood smear examination revealed negative for any haemo protozoan infection.

Table 1: Haematological Parameters

Parameters	Value
Haemoglobin (mg/dl)	16.30
Red Blood Corpuscles (mill/cmm)	7.50
Total Leucocytes Count/cmm	9950
Neutrophils (%)	59
Lymphocytes (%)	36
Eosinophils (%)	2
Monocytes (%)	3
Platelets (10 ⁵ /cmm)	2.90
Packed cell volume (%)	46.40

Treatment and Discussion

On the bases of history and clinical examinations the case was diagnosed as Limber tail syndrome which is very rare condition.



Fig 1: Dropped Tail

The dog was treated with Inj. Meloxicam @ 0.2 mg/kg along with injectable neuro vitamins intramuscularly. The owner advised to keep the dog in warm environment with complete rest. On next day the dog was presented with normal locomotion and tail movement. No treatment was provided on next day and owner advised to keep dog in warm environment after bathing.

The exact etiology is still unclear but several factors including exposure to too cold or too warm climate, prolonged cage transportation, vigorous exercise (hunting and swimming) are thought to be associated with the development of this condition. The lifestyle are associated with this disease but not associated with dog height, weight, coat colour, household type, owner smoking status and exercise levels. There may be gene–environment interaction is responsible for mediating the disease. There is no clear definition of this condition and it is diagnosed on the basis of signalment, the clinical signs and their rapid self-resolution, which excludes other likely causes of tail flaccidity and stiffness [2]. The electro myographic study indicate during walking and trotting, reciprocal EMG bursts were observed between right and left tail muscles and corresponded with lateral movements of the tail. The tonic discharges in ECL and FCL seemed to maintain the position of the tail. During galloping, synchronized EMG activity of all tail muscles produced reactive torques to counter those generated by cyclic limb movements and kept the tail in a stable position. These results suggest that tail movements are important in maintaining body balance during locomotion in the dog [4]. Overexertion of muscles lead to ischemic injury and developed in to limber tail syndrome. In the present case dog was presented with history of took in to cold environment under air conditioned room and developed staggering gait and dropped tail. The dog was treated with anti-inflammatory drug and neuro vitamins and advised to keep dog in to warm environment. The dog was recovered on very next day.

Similar symptoms and history in German shepherd dog treated with the same line but developed other complications [1]. This condition is very rare and might be neglected by owners if the symptoms are very less or limited to tail only. Anand city is located in Gujarat state with tropical climate. Dog owners with air conditioned house are keeping their pets inside the home with them and immediate after outdoor bath sudden change in temperature lead to develop a limber tail syndrome in pets.

In conclusion, the Labrador dog with limber tail syndrome treated successfully. The occurrence of this disease is mostly

life style related which can be prevented by keeping pet dogs in warm environment immediate after bath instead of taking them to air conditioned in by owners from tropical climatic zone.

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