JUVENILE CELLULITIS IN A DACHSHUND PUP

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Juvenile cellulitis (Juvenile pyoderma, puppy strangles or puppy head gland disease) is an uncommon disease of pups less than four months old characterized by pyogranulomatous swelling of face, head and ears with regional lymphadenopathy (Scott *et al.*, 2001).

Case history and observations

A six weeks old male Dachshund pup was presented to the University Veterinary College Hospital, Mannuthy with history of general weakness and pustular lesions on the inner surface of ears since two days. On physical examination, many pustules were visible on both pinnae. The puppy was pyretic (103.8°F) and heart and respiratory rates were within normal range cytologic examination of an ear swab was negative for ear mites. The puppy was treated with amoxicillin-cloxacillin @ 10 mg/kg body weight orally twice daily for five days and external application of an antifungal, antibacterial lotion on the affected pinnae.

By day three, the owner reported that the condition of the puppy had remained unchanged and there was development of small pimples on the lower lip.

By day 10, the animal was again brought to the hospital with marked pustular and exudative lesions on the ear, nodular swellings over the trunk, neck, preputial and perineal areas. Some lesions had fistulated with thick discharge or crusted. Submandibular and prescapular lymph nodes were markedly enlarged (Fig.1). The puppy was unwilling either to walk or stand. The animal exhibited severe pain while touching the body parts. Cytology of aspirate from intact pustules revealed many neutrophils without bacteria. Aspirates were negative for bacterial growth on culturing and the condition was suspected for juvenile cellulitis.

Histopathological examination of skin biopsy revealed pyogranulomatous perifolliculitis most suggestive of juvenile cellulitis.

The puppy was treated on day 12 with prednisolone @ 2 mg/kg body weight orally for 14 days. By 10th day of treatment the otic and facial lesions were decreased in size and number. So the treatment was continued for 14 days and then tapered with half the dose over next five days.

Results and Discussion

The puppy was clinically normal by 20 days of treatment with prednisolone (Fig.2). Juvenile cellulitis is an uncommon granulomatous and pustular disorder of puppies less than four months of age (Scott *et al.*, 2001). Clinical signs observed in the present case agreed with the observation of Mason and Jones (1989) and White *et al.* (1989). Cytologic examination of papulopustular lesions of juvenile cellulitis revealed pyogranulomatous inflammation with no microorganisms suggesting a non bacterial etiology as

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Fig. 1. Before treatment

Fig. 2. After treatment

reported by Hutchings (2003). Since the condition responded well to the massive doses of corticosteroids it indicated an immune dysfunction as suggested by White *et al.* (1989). However, as the severity of this syndrome may justify euthanasia, it is important that the possibility of juvenile cellulitis be explored early (Mason and Jones, 1989) allowing for initiation of glucocorticoid therapy, which is contraindicated in treating bacterial pyoderma.

References

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