

## RABIES IN CATS – TWO CASE REPORTS

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Dogs are found to be the main vectors for human rabies in India. Next to dogs, cats were incriminated as the transmitter of rabies virus to human beings. Generally public are not much aware of rabies in cats and rarely they are vaccinated against rabies. In this article two cases of cat rabies are discussed.

### Case history and Observations

#### Case No: 1.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> of November 2003 one cat was presented at the University Veterinary Hospital, Mannuthy with the complaint that the cat was showing aggressive behavior on the previous day and was reluctant to take food. It was having a temperature of 103.8°F. There was swaying of the hindquarter while walking. On examination an unhealed wound was noticed on its right hind limb. The animal was calm and was cooperative to clinical examination and never showed any behavioral change during clinical examination. The mucous membrane was pale and pupils were partially responsive to light. Upon detailed enquiry the owners recollected the presence of an unknown dog about three weeks back, which might have inflicted the injury. Corneal impression smears and saliva were collected for fluorescent antibody test and no evidence for rabies could be traced out in corneal impression or saliva. Amoxycillin - Cloxacillin (50 mg) and Neurobion (0.25ml) were given intramuscularly and the cat was admitted in the inpatient ward for close observation.

The animal was quite friendly to its owner on the next day morning but when attempted the routine examination the animal showed some violence so we could not accomplish the same. Paralysis of the hind limbs was observed. It refused to take food but drank some quantity of milk. The animal was left for further observation.

On the next day morning, it was found much more weak and was totally paralytic, off food and lethargic but was able to identify its owners. Animal died on the same day evening.

Post mortem examination was conducted and rabies was confirmed by the examination of brain by fluorescent antibody test (FAT). Seller's staining of brain impression smears were negative for Negri bodies.

#### Case No: 2.

On 14<sup>th</sup> January 2004, a cat was presented at the University Veterinary Hospital, Mannuthy with the history that the cat was showing violent behavioral changes for the last three days and was off food. One, four year old baby was bitten on face by this cat two days back without any provocation. Since then the cat was caged by the owners. The animal was paralytic at the time of presentation. No salivation was observed. The owners recognized no history of dog bite. The cat was having a subnormal temperature and the mucous membrane was pale. The cat was given antibiotic (Amoxycillin Cloxacillin @ 15 mg/kg) and Neurobion (0.25ml) intramuscularly and 50 ml of dextrose saline subcutaneously.

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The animal died on the same day evening. Postmortem examination was conducted on the next day morning and rabies was confirmed in FAT. Negri bodies could not be detected in Seller's staining.

## Discussion

Domestic cats are primarily incidental hosts in rabies and do not often play an important role in the perpetuation of the agent in its natural cycle. The disease in this species occurs as spillover infections from underlying foci (Vaughn, 1975). The clinical pictures in these two cases were entirely different. One animal was very aggressive while the other animal showed aggressiveness only for a short period of one day and was sociable and calm to its owners. Both animals showed no salivation.

Both these cats were maintained as pets by the owners and not vaccinated against rabies. In the first case there was a history of stray dog attack about three weeks back but in the second case no such history was noticed. Owners of the first cat were totally unaware of post exposure antirabic vaccination. The second cat was brought from an area where rabies was endemic at that time.

These reports suggested the necessity of periodic prophylactic antirabies vaccination among cats maintained as pets in endemic areas.

## Reference

- Vaughn, J, B. 1975. Latency and Abortive Rabies. *The natural history of rabies*. (ed Baer.G.M) volume 1. Academic Press, INC, Newyork. pp. 139-153.

