

Interpretive Summary

Masticatory Myositis in a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel

Case Description: A 2 year old, female spayed, 9.2kg Cavalier King Charles Spaniel presented for weight loss and depression after her owners brought home a new born baby. The dog was very bonded to owners, but no amount of time with the pet improved its attitude. On presentation, the patient's body condition appeared normal; yet, it was unable to open its mouth more than ½ inch without severe pain. The owners interpreted the inability to open the mouth to dental disease. The remainder of the physical exam was unremarkable. A complete blood count, serum chemistry profile, thyroid levels, tick serology, and 2M antibody test were performed. Zuprin 11 mg/kg q24h was prescribed for pain and the patient scheduled for an oral exam under sedation. Laboratory abnormalities included a CPK of 1366U/L (< 895 normal), leukocytosis of 22,900(<15,500 normal), and platelets of 143,000(normal 170-400,000). The oral exam was unremarkable except for the inability to open the mouth beyond ½ inch (trismus). A tentative diagnosis of masticatory myositis (MM) was made. Pending antibody test results, doxycycline (5mg/kg PO q 12h) was instituted to cover for potential tick related illnesses. The dog showed no response to either medication. 10 days later, the 2M antibody test was reported as positive at 1:100, supporting a diagnosis of masticatory myositis. Tick serology was negative. All previous medications were discontinued and the an immuno-suppressive dosage of prednisone (1.1mg/kg PO q 12h) was instituted for 2 weeks in an effort to prevent masticatory muscle fibrosis

Outcome: Within 48 hours the patient was eating better and able to open mouth. The owner noted temporalis muscle atrophy developing within 5 days and slowly progressing over the next 30 days. After 2 weeks the prednisone dose was slowly tapered until dog was off all medication after 6 months. No relapse has been noted up to this time.

Implications/Applications:

The owner's interpretation of the dog's behavior (new baby in household, dental disease) was irrelevant to the dog's condition. A delay in physical exam could have resulted in fibrosis and the scarring of the jaw muscles and permanent trismus. While MM is typically a disease of large breeds, the occurrence in a King Charles Spaniel emphasized its possible occurrence in many breeds.

References:

Podell M, Inflammatory Myopathies. In; Shelton GD, ed. Neuromuscular Diseases, Veterinary Clinics of North America. Philadelphia: WB Saunders. January 2002: 151-153.