

Poster presentations

geons and veterinary nurses). Thirty-two interviews with owners recruited from 17 practices in England and Scotland captured experiences of treating 35 osteoarthritic dogs. Five focus groups were conducted in four veterinary practices, four with veterinary surgeons and one with veterinary nurses. A purposive sampling methodology was used to capture a wide range of opinions. Interviews and focus groups were audio-recorded then transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis was performed to identify emergent themes.

Three themes relevant to the use of NSAIDs were identified: awareness of potential risks; recognition of adverse events; and the influence of risk perception on use of NSAIDs. Almost all owners were aware of some adverse events associated NSAID administration to dogs and many expressed concern about these risks. Awareness came from sources including the internet, personal experience with human NSAIDs and their veterinary surgeon. Veterinary

professionals described it difficult to distinguish true adverse events from concurrent gastrointestinal disease and the estimated incidence of adverse events varied greatly. This contributed to concern about using NSAIDs in older dogs and a desire to use the lowest possible effective dose. Owners and veterinary professionals described many dosing and monitoring strategies intended to minimise adverse events. These included complete avoidance of NSAIDs, reduction of daily dosage, alternate day dosing and frequent blood monitoring. Many veterinary surgeons were aware that the evidence base for these strategies is poor.

This study highlights the impact of concern about adverse events on the use of NSAIDs in older dogs. Accurate data on the prevalence of adverse events associated with NSAID treatment in dogs and evidence-based strategies to minimise adverse events are urgently needed to ensure all dogs with osteoarthritis receive adequate analgesia.

A novel regenerative approach to treating canine lumbosacral disease: a role for adipose derived mesenchymal stem cells?

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Lumbosacral disease is a common condition affecting older dogs and also younger dogs, such as Border Collies, that are involved in agility work. The disease causes a variety of symptoms from back pain, hind limb weakness, reluctance to jump and ataxia to neurological deficits causing incontinence. The condition is usually progressive and management involves drug therapy (anti-inflammatories and analgesics), exercise management, weight control, and physiotherapy. Surgical options such as decompressive surgery (laminectomy) and distraction and stabilization surgeries are very invasive techniques with potential complications. A private independent veterinary practice has treated a variety of orthopaedic conditions with stem cell therapy (SCT) and laser therapy. Whilst SCT is mainly used for joint osteoarthritis cases, reports in human lumbar conditions makes this an interesting minimally invasive potential therapy for canine lumbosacral disease.

Five dogs presenting with a history of severe back pain and radiographic evidence of lumbosacral disease attending

the veterinary practice have received SCT with laser therapy in this small case series. All were being treated with a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug and some were also receiving one or more analgesics. Subcutaneous adipose tissue was harvested from each dog under a short general anaesthetic and blood taken for cell culture. Cell Therapy Sciences Ltd isolated the adult adipose-derived mesenchymal stem cells from the tissue and culture-expanded them. These were then shipped in sterile vials cryogenically frozen in the dog's own serum.

The autologous stem cell treatment was given intravenously and by epidural injection at the lumbosacral junction under sedation. Immediately following implantation, the lumbosacral region was targeted with laser therapy using a class IV laser with appropriate settings for each animal. The laser treatment was repeated three times a week for two weeks and then monthly for three months.

Efficacy of treatment was monitored by veterinary physical examination, pet-owner assessment using validated questionnaires (canine brief pain inventory (CBPI) and Liverpool osteoarthritis in dogs (LOAD) questionnaire) and repeat radiographs at three and six months after treatment where possible.

All treated dogs became pain free at the lumbosacral region, were able to come off all analgesics and regained full activity. The CBPI and LOAD scores were significantly reduced in all treated dogs.

The author concludes that SCT combined with laser therapy is a very effective, minimally invasive, drug free treatment option for lumbosacral disease and warrants further investigation.

Patellar luxation in dogs attending primary-care practice in England

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Patellar luxation (PL) is a common disorder in dogs and has welfare implications including degenerative joint disease and pain. This study aimed to identify the prevalence and risk factors for PL in dogs attending primary-care practice in England and to report on clinical management.

The study included all dogs in the VetCompass Programme from September 1st, 2009 to August 31st, 2014. The clinical notes were searched using PL-suggestive terms to identify candidate PL cases and a subset of these were