



Pacific Tide

An informational monthly newsletter

December 2011
Volume 1, Issue 1

Pacific Veterinary Specialists & Emergency Service - 1980 41st Avenue, Capitola, CA 95010
Specialty 831-476-2584 -Emergency 831-476-0667

Pacific Veterinary Specialists Monterey, 2 Harris Court Suite A-1, Monterey, CA 93940
Monterey Office 831-717-4834 or Capitola 831-476-2584

Author of the month:



Merriane Burtch, DVM, DACVIM

Dr. Burtch received her Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine from UC Davis in 1993. She completed an internship at Santa Cruz Veterinary Hospital in 1994. In 1996 she completed an ACVIM approved residency in internal medicine at the same facility, which included out-rotations at UC Davis. She became board certified in internal medicine in 1999. Dr. Burtch's special interests include diabetes mellitus, gastroenterology and liver disease.

Update on Immune mediated disease

Immune mediated diseases can be frustrating and frightening for veterinarians and owners. There is a wide spectrum of urgency in these cases which can range from acute intravascular hemolysis to mild discoid lupus erythematosus. It can be difficult to explain to owners that the incredibly efficient immune system has misfired in the process of making antibodies to SELF.

Treatment of the life-threatening forms of immune mediated diseases. Immune mediated hemolytic anemia (IMHA), immune mediated thrombocytopenia (IMTP) and immune mediated leukopenia, can be challenging and range from simply placing a patient on prednisone to racing them to a 24 hour facility for aggressive intervention and monitoring. Determining which type of case you have and what is best for your patient and client can be challenging as these cases can be rapidly dynamic.

It is always prudent to let owners know that this is a life-threatening disease and dependent upon response and severity may have a survival rate as low as 50% with acute hemolysis. If animals are significantly anemic, febrile and/or jaundiced, 24-hour care with critical care or internal medicine is recommended.

There are three important components to 24 hour hospitalization of these critical patients.

-Parenteral administration and daily adjustments of immunosuppressive drugs are often needed for effective and

timely results.

- Intensive monitoring allows immediate intervention as needed for hemorrhage, thrombosis or fluid overload and consequences of vasculitis common in immune mediated disease.

- Aggressive supportive care including fluid therapy, anti-emetics, GI protectants, prokinetics, and other therapies can be life-saving in these patients.

The clinical status of a patient, knowledge of recent trigger (vaccine) and the client's preference dictates how to proceed. Hospitalization also allows a more considered approach to transfusions of blood products. Concerns with transfusions include increased antigenic stimulus, increased bilirubin from ongoing hemolysis and over transfusion. Given the risks of continued red blood cell transfusions to an IMHA patient, it is often preferable to wait for lower hematocrits before transfusion therefore, very careful monitoring of the patient should include watchfulness for signs of anemic shock and frequent PCV checks.

Many newer immunosuppressive medications have helped us treat these cases with fewer steroid side effects. With the ability to add cyclosporine, leflunomide, mycophenylate, in addition to the more traditional second drugs: cyclophosphamide, azathioprine and chlorambucil, our recovery rate has improved markedly.

Immune mediated polyarthritis can also be a

difficult diagnosis to make and joint taps are an important diagnostic in shifting leg lameness. Some of these patients manifest with neck or spinal pain since the intervertebral facets are a source of inflammation as well. Fever, reluctance to walk and puffy distal joints are highly suggestive, but this can be an elusive diagnosis as well. Again the medications listed above are helpful in attaining remission without steroid toxicity.

Dermatological immune mediated diseases also have newer therapy success with medications other than traditional steroids. Use of tacrolimus as an alternative oral cyclosporine allows us to keep perianal fistulas in remission at lower costs. Discoid lupus erythematosus (DLE), symmetrical lupoid onychodystrophy (SLO) and to some extent pemphigus foliaceus can benefit from combination therapy. Niacinamide and doxycycline remain helpful ancillary therapy that can decrease the frequency and dose of steroids to keep disease in check.

Let us know if you have questions about your cases with immune mediated disease. We will do our best to answer questions and always welcome your referral of cases that might need supervision by critical care specialists or internal medicine in a 24 hour facility.

**Pacific Veterinary
Specialists & Emergency
Service**

1980 41st Avenue
Capitola, CA 95010

Phone
(831) 476-2584

Emergency
(831) 476-0667

Fax
(831) 476-8499

E-mail
pvses@pacbell.net

**Pacific Veterinary
Specialists Monterey**
2 Harris Court Suite A-1
Monterey, CA 93940

Phone
(831) 717-4834

Fax
(831) 717-4837

Emergency (Capitola)
(831) 476-0667

E-mail
pvsmonterey@pacbell.net



We're on the Web!
See us at:
www.pvses.com

Specialty Services and Our Doctors

Internal Medicine

Kelly Akol, DVM, DACVIM
Merrienne Burtch, DVM,
DACVIM
Michelle Pressel, DVM,
DACVIM

Surgery

Lisa Metelman, MS, DVM,
DACVS
Tom LaHue, DVM, DACVS

Critical Care

Colleen Brady, DVM,
DACVECC
Lillian Good, DVM, DACVECC

Oncology

Theresa Arteaga, DVM,
DACVIM(Oncology)

Cardiology

Mandi Kleman, DVM,
DACVIM(Cardiology)

Radiology

Larry Kerr, DVM, DACVR
Mark Lee, DVM, DACVR
Michelle Laurensen, DVM,
DACVR

Emergency

Chris Robison, DVM
Kim Delkener, DVM
Mark Saphir, DVM
Jessica Kurek, DVM

Behavior

Jan Brennan, DVM

Alternative Therapies

Darren Hawks, DVM

About Our Organization

PVSES was founded to provide high quality, specialized medical care to companion animal patients. Our practice is dedicated to serving the veterinary community as a partner in total patient

care. We offer comprehensive specialized services including endoscopy, Doppler ultrasound, surgery, 24-hour ICU care, and emergency and critical care. Our

staff is committed to providing compassionate and thorough medical care that meets the needs of the patient, client, and referring veterinarian.

**Pacific Veterinary Specialists &
Emergency Service**
1980 41st Avenue
Capitola, CA 95010

