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(CASE STUDY)



A case of cruelty in dog and its management

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Abstract

Cases of animal cruelty are on the increase all over the world. Cruelty in dogs is mostly perpetrated by dog owners and those in the neighborhood. This could be intentional or unintentional. Studies have suggested that persons who are cruel to animals are linked to one form of violence or the other. Adequate legislation, education and psychological counseling of people involved in acts of cruelty to animals are some of the approaches to curb violence to animals. The case report presented here centers on an injury inflicted on a dog that strayed from the home for 5 days and how the wound was managed.

Keywords: Cruelty; Wound management; Dog owners; Psychological counseling

1. Introduction

Animal cruelty is a socially unacceptable behavior that intentionally causes unnecessary pain, suffering, distress to and or death of an animal [1]. Failure to provide adequate food, shelter, water or veterinary care usually due to ignorance is the most common type of animal cruelty around the world [2]. Some dog owners intentionally withhold food or water [3], giving rise to animals going out to fend for themselves. Most dogs pick up injuries in their bid to scavenge. Animal cruelty has been linked to variety of crimes including violence against other people, property crimes and drug or disorderly conduct and offenses [4]. Fifty (50) violent and 50 non-violent inmates were studied to determine if and how animal cruelty was associated with their development and behavior. Statistically significant portion of the offenders had committed acts of animal cruelty as indicated by the result [5].

2. Case report

A 2 Year old male mongrel dog, brown in color with black stripe was presented to the Small Animal Clinic of the Veterinary Teaching Hospital, University of Agriculture Makurdi on 17th of November, 2014 with the chief complaint of wound on the dorsum (Fig. 1A). History revealed that the dog left the house for 5 days and returned with wounds on the back. There was a massive wound on the dorsum with necrotic skin patches attached at some areas. The dog shows groaning signs of pains. Other clinical findings on presentation and on day 2 and 5 are shown in Table 1.

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Figure 1 Photograph of dog (A- at the time of presentation, B- at post debridement, C- during dressing, D- during recovery, E- after recovery).

Table 1 Clinical observation of dog

Parameters	Observations			Normal values
	On presentation	Day 2	Day 5	
Weight (kg)	20	20	20	-
Pulse rate (beats/min)	110	44	72	90-120
Heart rate (beats/min)	120	60	86	90-120
Resp. rate (cycle/min)	32	30	29	15-30
Temperature (°C)	41.5	38.6	38.6	38.5-39.5
Mucous membrane	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink

Normal values for vital parameters: The Merck Veterinary Manual, tenth edition (2010).

The dog was premedicated using atropine (0.05 mg/kg, i.m) and sedated using xylazine (3 mg/kg, i.m). The site of injury (Fig. 1A) was shaved using a razor blade. Necrotic areas were debrided to create fresh wound. Hydrogen peroxide (6 % w/v) was diluted with equal volume of water and used to mop the surface (Fig. 1B). Penicillin ointment (5000 i.u/g) was liberally applied topically on the wound, thereafter gauze was used to cover the entire wound surface (Fig. 1C). Charmil skin spray (a multi-action skin gel containing *Azadirachta indica*, *Cedrus deodora*, and *Pongamia pinnata*) was applied over the surface of the gauze. The gauze was fastened to both ends and a plastic collar attached round the neck to prevent the dog from biting or removing the gauze to prevent exposing or contamination of the wound (Fig. 1C).

Penstrep® (200 mg of penicillin G and 250 mg of dihydrostreptomycin) was administered for 5 days at a dose of 1ml/25kg to prevent secondary bacterial infection. Piroxicam (0.3 mg/kg) a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory, analgesic and antipyretic agent was administered for 3 days. The dog was hospitalized for close monitoring and the dressing of the wound was carried out every other day. The dog during recovery is shown in Fig. 1D.

3. Discussion

The case report has shown the extent of damage that was inflicted on a dog (Fig. 1A and 1B). The dog was reported to have left the house for 5 days and was presented to the clinic upon its return. Dogs that are not adequately cared for have the tendency of leaving the house in search of food [6]. This could result in their been attacked or injured by people in the neighborhood. In this case, the owner of the dog travelled and left the dog in the care of the house help who did not care much for the welfare of the dog warranting it to leave the house without his knowledge for a period of five days. The house help did not know the where about of the dog, neither was he able to describe what has happened to it. If this dog was well cared for it should not have gone out of the house for such a long period of time. The nature of the injury suggested to us that the dog must have been attacked with a corrosive or hot liquid. This observation is based on the depth and edges of the wound.

Cruelty to animals by dog owners can result in increased number of stray dogs which is a major source of concern in the epidemiology of rabies [7]. In developing countries such as Nigeria, many people keep dogs for various reasons like pets, security or haunting without adequate care [8]. Most of the times, these dogs are left to fend for themselves. This makes them to roam around as stray dogs.

Studies have shown that people who are cruel to animals have tendencies for crime [4]. Children who are cruel to animals disproportionately tend to be violent to people later in life [9]. Case histories of serial killers and mass murders suggest that many were cruel to animals during childhood [9]. It is argued that cruelty to animals in the family tend to be associated with domestic violence, child abuse and elder abuse [10]. From the fore going, it is important that the general public should take the issue of cruelty to animals very seriously because cruelty to animals is linked to cruelty to humanity.

In combating animal cruelty effectively, the government, individuals and non-governmental organizations (NGO) should be actively involved in education and sensitization of the general public. The government creates and implements the law, the individuals ensures reporting of cases of animal cruelty, while the NGOs will carry out campaigns on animal welfare [11].

4. Conclusion

Animal welfare studies should be taken seriously, given that cruelty to animals is a form of violence and its studies will help give insight into other social vices. The affected dog recovered fully after four weeks.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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