Abstract Thoughts

Offering a brief look at the latest important research presented in the international veterinary literature.

Idiopathic Inflammation of Epidural Fat in Dachshunds


ABSTRACT This retrospective study from a veterinary medical center in Tokyo describes the clinicopathologic features of idiopathic sterile pyogranulomatous inflammation of epidural fat causing spinal cord compression in five mature miniature dachshunds. During the time interval of the study (2000–2006), 515 miniature dachshunds were surgically treated for thoracolumbar disk disease. Three of the five dogs identified as having idiopathic sterile pyogranulomatous inflammation of epidural fat were ambulatory and had chronic paraspinal pain; the other two dogs were acutely paraparetic/paraplegic and nonambulatory. No abnormalities were detected on hematologic profile tests. Three dogs had received prednisolone therapy for 1 to 5 months before admission. Myelography indicated focal or multifocal extradural spinal compression in the thoracolumbar region in all five dogs. Hemilaminectomy revealed a compressive, easily removable mass of epidural fat characterized histologically as pyogranulomatous inflammatory steatitis. Microbial culture of the surgical specimen was conducted for two dogs and yielded no bacterial growth. All dogs recovered well from surgery and were ambulatory within 1 to 18 days. Improved neurologic status was noted for a median of 17 months after surgery. Two dogs had other pyogranulomatous lesions after surgery, and four dogs received postoperative prednisolone therapy.

COMMENTARY Intervertebral disk disease in dachshunds is a common clinical scenario for small animal practitioners. Dogs can present with variable neurologic signs, and diagnostic imaging is critical in establishing a diagnosis. The results of this study should alert clinicians to the possibility of a compressive thoracolumbar spinal lesion in dachshunds that is not an intervertebral disk-related lesion. Although myelography provided significant diagnostic information about the location of the lesion, it would be interesting to know in future studies if cerebrospinal fluid analysis or magnetic resonance imaging would be beneficial in the work-up of these cases. It appears that surgical decompression and histologic evaluation of excised tissue were critical in recovery and the final diagnosis. It is interesting to note the systemic involvement of pyogranulomatous disease in some of the dogs and the inconclusive effects of corticosteroids.