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Management of Dystocia Due to Unilateral Post-Cervical Torsion in Ewe

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ABSTRACT

The present clinical case of unilateral post-cervical torsion in ewe reports the successful delivery of a fetus by rolling the ewe using Schaffer's method with little modification from large animals. A pluriparous non-descript ewe aged about 2.5 years was presented at VCC, Junagadh, Gujarat with a history of completion of gestation and straining for 24 hours. The per-vaginal fetus was delivered successfully after rolling the dam with slight traction. The dam had an uneventful recovery.

***Keywords*:** Torsion, Dystocia, Schaffer's Method, Ewe.

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INTRODUCTION

Dystocia in ewe defined as failure of transition from stage I to stage II labor or when little to no progress is made for 30 minutes or more after the start of stage II labor (Anderson, 2014). Uterine torsion is a rotation of the gravid uterus on its long axis. The torsion of the uterus can occur in any animal species and most frequently in the third trimester of pregnancy or during the first or second stage of labour (Roberts, 1971). It is most common in dairy cows and rare in bitches, mares, ewes and does (Scott, 2011). Torsion of the uterus can occur at low degrees, such as 45° to 90° or even at 180° to 360°. Uterine torsion above 180° can be fatal to both fetus and dam (Roberts, 2004). Palpating the stenosed anterior vagina, whose walls are frequently arranged in oblique spirals that indicate the direction of uterine rotation, is a simple way to make the diagnosis (Arthur, 2001). The appropriate method was selected for relieving uterine torsion based on the degree of rotation among per-vaginal rotation of the fetus, rolling of the dam and Schaffer's method. When the above techniques fail to relieve the torsion caesarean section is performed (Ghuman, 2010).

CASE HISTORY AND OBSERVATIONS

A pluriparous non-descript ewe aged about 2.5 years was presented at VCC, Junagadh, Gujarat with a history of completion of gestation and straining since 24 hours. On clinical examination, the animal was dull with no evidence of water bag rupture or escape of fetal fluids from the birth canal. The vulva was enlarged, relaxed, swollen and moderately edematous and the udder was fully developed.

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The gynaeco-clinical examination revealed obstruction of vagina caudal to the cervix, vaginal mucosal fold twisted conically. The fetus could not be palpated due to complete obstruction of vagina indicating uterine torsion of more than 180° and is the direction of the right side.

TREATMENT AND DISCUSSION

The dystocia in animals is considered an emergency condition. The timely attention will increase the chances of survivability of both fetus and the dam. The present case was diagnosed as post cervical right side torsion more than 180° which collaborated well with the findings of Naidu (2012) and Velladurai et al (2016). The contrary to the present finding was with the earlier reports (Phogat *et al.*, 2007), who observed pre-cervical uterine torsion of about 270° towards the right side. The author also opined that the diagnosis of pre-cervical uterine torsion is very difficult and can be identified only during the caesarian section.

The present clinical case was managed by using Schaffer's method of detorsion with little modification from large animals. Rolling of the ewe was attempted the same as cow and used a wooden plank of 2 × 0.5 feet dimensions (Fig. 1). The ewe was cast on the right side lateral recumbency. The plank was fixed on the left flank region by applying pressure with fingers to fix the position of the fetus inside the abdominal cavity. The ewe was slowly rolled in the same direction as the torsion by maintaining the pressure in the plank. On two successful rotations, torsion was removed, cervix was found completely dilated, and a water bag appeared rupture (Fig. 2). In this case, detorsion was done by Schaffer's method. This approach is commonly used to relieve the torsion (Arthur *et al.*, 2001; Kumar et al., 2014; Manokaran *et al.*, 2014). Gupta et al (2021) reported that Schaffer's method has the success rate of 83.3% for relieving uterine torsion and a post treatment fertility rate of 100%. Hence this method is most suitable for treating the uterine torsion of small ruminants under field conditions.

The uterine torsion above 180° is fatal for most of the dam and fetus (Roberts, 2004) as in the present case a dead male fetus was delivered by applying mild traction. But the dam was saved successfully by conservative therapy. The Furea boli (Nitrofurazone 60 mg, Urea 6g ® Pfizer Ltd. Mumbai) administered inside the uterus, Ciprofloxacin (® Cipex) dosed at 5 mg/kg b.wt., Meloxicam (Melonex ® Intas Pharma, Gujarat) dosed at 0.1 mg/Kg b.wt., i.m. For 5 days, Electrolyte infusions (Intalyte ® Intas Pharma) dosed at 250 ml i.v. for 5 days were given.

Uterine torsion in small ruminants is generally associated with a single fetus in the uterus, which is consistent with the present study. Twinning or bicornual pregnancy lessens the chance of uterine twisting (Roberts, 1971).

Fig. 1: Rolling of ewe by Schaffer's method with little modification

Fig. 2: Ewe after relieving of torsion

CONCLUSION

The successful detorsion by rolling of the ewe was carried out by using Schaffer's method with little modification from large animals. The per-vaginal fetus was delivered successfully after rolling of dam with slight traction.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

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