

## Feline fetal mummification

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### ABSTRACT

A case of fetal mummification in a cat and its successful therapeutic management through surgical approach has been reported in the present paper.

**Key words :** Fetal mummification, feline

Fetal death in domestic animal occurring in the middle or last third of gestation that does not result in luteolysis and abortion causes autolytic changes in the fetus, absorption of fetal fluids and mummification of the fetus (Roberts, 1971). Fetal mummification in cat is uncommon and sporadic in nature. In large litter size it is assumed to be due to uterine over crowding. Feline viral rhinotracheitis and feline pan-leucopenia virus causes abortion, fetal mummification, still born kittens (Arthur *et al.*, 1996). Here in this report, a case of fetal mummification and its surgical management in a cat is presented.

A non-descript queen cat aged two years, littered once earlier was referred to the Teaching Hospital of Rajiv Gandhi College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences with a history of intermittent anorexia, abnormal vaginal discharge since a week. The queen cat has undergone symptomatic treatment earlier for the same in a local veterinary hospital. The rectal temperature was 38.2c with anorexia and the animal was dull and depressed. The perineum of the animal was soiled with foul smelling vaginal discharge. Abdominal palpation revealed hard irregular mass. The history of mating was not clear and the animal had not showed any signs of parturition earlier.

Radiographic examination of lateral view of the abdomen indicated the presence of skeleton with air filled cavities inside the uterus, suggestive of autolytic changes following fetal death (Fig. 1).

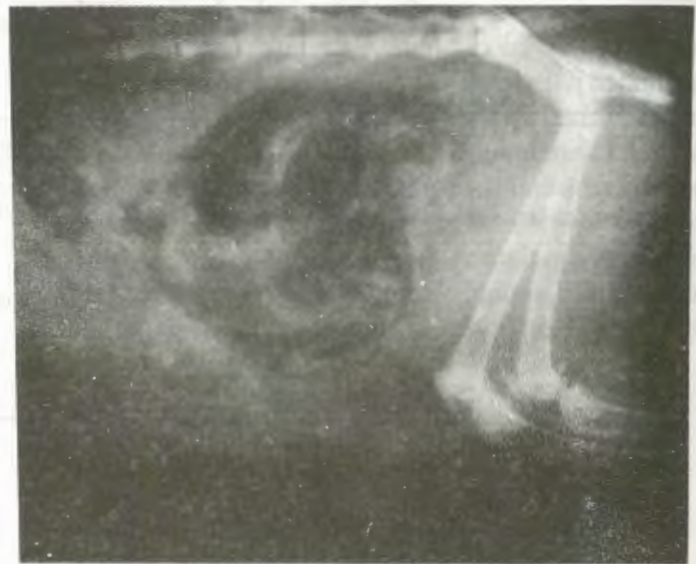


Fig. 1. Fetal mummification in cat

**Surgical management:** Right side low mid flank laparotomy was performed under general anaesthesia using Ketamine and Xylazine combination at the dose rate of 5 mg/kg body weight and 1mg/kg body weight intramuscular, respectively.

The uterine walls were fairly thick, the fluids were resorbed and the membranes closely adhered with the desiccated fetus, the whole mass was moist on the surface with sticky mucus and more leather like tissues of the fetus was evident. In cat uterus plays no role in the onset of luteolysis (Wheeler *et al.*, 1988). Hence in this case fetal death would have occurred before the end of gestation period and the fetus would have undergone

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autolytic changes. However when the day of parturition approached, luteolysis and cervical relaxation would have commenced which resulted in invasion of microorganism. Hence the two factors that open cervix, evident from the soiled perineum and dead fetus at body temperature with bacterial invasion would have resulted in the onset of maceration of an already mummified fetus in the uterus. Since the future breeding possibilities was limited in this condition it was decided to perform panhysterectomy. Two grams of Ampicilline-Cloxacilline was sprayed inside the abdominal cavity. The muscle layer of the abdominal wall was closed by no:2-0 catgut suture and the skin with black braided silk. Ampicilline-Cloxacilline at a dose of 10 mg/kg body weight was given by intramuscular route daily for five consecutive days

post operatively and the sutures were removed on the seventh day. The queen cat recovered uneventfully.

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