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Surgical Management of Aural Haematoma in a Rabbit - A Case Report

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Aural haematoma is the collection of blood or serum within the cartilage plate of the ear pinna which presents as fluctuant, fluid-filled swelling on the concave surface of one or both the pinna (Fossum, 2007). It occurs as a result of constant shaking and rubbing of ear due to otitis, ectoparasitism, otorrhoea, foreign bodies, hypersensitivity and allergic dermatitis. This chronic irritation, constant shaking and rubbing of the ear leads to rupture of the pinnal blood vessel resulting in haematoma formation (Ahiwar *et al.*, 2007).

Case history and Clinical Observations

A one and half year old male Soviet Chinchilla rabbit weighing about two kg was presented to Veterinary Dispensary, Somanahalli, Bengaluru with a history of head shaking, anorexia and swollen left ear since five days. (Fig.1). On examination, the rabbit had all the vitals within the normal range. Also a soft fluctuating swelling was noticed at the concave side of the left ear and slight pain on palpation of ear pinna. Aspiration of the fluctuating mass was performed which showed blood mixed fluid. The case was diagnosed as aural hematoma and decided for surgical drainage.

Treatment and Discussion

The hairs were clipped at both sides of the affected ear and the surgical site was prepared aseptically. The animal was anaesthetized with a combination of Diazepam @ 1 mg/kg body weight intramuscularly and Ketamine hydrochloride @ 40 mg/kg body weight intramuscularly. The rabbit was placed on lateral recumbency with affected ear on top and a sterile swab was placed in the external orifice of the ear to prevent overflow of the hematoma content into the ear canal. A linear incision was made at the centre of haematoma on the concave side of the ear. The haematoma was drained out and the inner lining of the skin and fibrin deposits on the cartilage were removed and tincture iodine swab was smeared on the cartilage. About 1-2 mm thickness skin flap was removed from the edges of the incision to create a gap between the edges of skin. Series of through and through interrupted mattress sutures using no 2/0 Monofilament polyamide (Trulon®, Suture India Pvt. Ltd, Bangalore, Karnataka) were placed parallel to the incision with knots on the convex surface of the ear (Figure 2).

Postoperatively the animal was given antibiotic Ceftriaxone @ 20 mg/kg body weight (Intacef 500 mg, Intas pharmaceutical, Allahabad) for seven days and the wound was regularly dressed and applied with Povidone iodine ointment. Sutures were removed on 10th post operative day. The animal made a good recovery after treatment and started taking food as before.



Fig 1: Rabbit Presented with Swollen Left Ear



Fig 2: Rabbit After Surgery

The auricular hematoma is one of the otological emergencies that occurs secondary to trauma. Aural hematoma was a common otological condition in dogs and this condition is mostly reported in pendulous ear breeds (Joyce, 2000). Rabbits are mostly affected by *Sarcoptes* which affect the ear resulting in ear canker and sometimes ear canker may predispose for aural hematoma (Manjunatha *et al.*, 2014).

The most common complications of aural haematomas are cosmetic alterations from delayed healing, recurrence from not properly addressing the underlying causes or not applying adequate sutures, or pinna damage from inappropriate suture placement (Henderson and Horne, 2003). In the present case, the animal made a good recovery and was observed for six months which showed no recurrence of haematoma.

Conflict of Interest: All authors declare no conflict of interest.

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