Amputation of tail in a Palm Civet  

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Upper motor Neuron affection  

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A 22-year old female chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*) was rescued from a circus company by the SPCA, Chennai and brought to the Arignar Anna Zoological Park veterinary hospital, Vandalur on 9 January 2003 for health assessment and intensive treatment. The animal was severely anaemic. Past history revealed that the chimp, used for performance in the circus, had fallen while performing and had become paralytic and bedridden since. Preliminary examination revealed that the chimp was severely emaciated, recumbent, with multiple decubitus ulcers involving hip joints, ilium, right tarsal joint and mid thoracic region (Image 1*). Ancylosis of stifle and hip joints was also noticed. No medical history could be retrieved from the person accompanying the chimp.

The chimp was transferred to a room for further clinical examination and treatment. Faecal samples were collected and examined for helminthic infestation, and no ova or eggs could be detected. Blood samples were collected and the animal was dewormed with Pyrantel pamoate (5mg/kg bodyweight). Tetanus toxoid (0.5ml) was administered as a prophylactic measure. The decubitus ulcers were cleaned and dressed twice daily. The animal’s position was changed once in three hours to avoid continuous pressure over the pressure points. Diet was supplemented with haematinics and multivitamin syrup and was the diet intake was monitored carefully. A course of Ampicillin and Cloxacillin (20mg/kg bodyweight) injection was given intramuscularly.

Radiological examination was done and an old compressed fracture of T₄-T₅ thoracic vertebrae with calcification was detected.

Based on the above findings, the condition was diagnosed as upper motor neuron affection and the prognosis was found to be unfavourable. It was decided to manage the case accordingly, so that the life of the chimp was extended as long as possible. To treat and to avoid further development of decubitus ulcers, the chimp was kept over an electric pressure alternating bed and the treatment was continued. The condition of the chimp improved by this treatment with evidence of healing of the decubitus ulcers. However, after a period of about one month, the chimp’s appetite gradually reduced, it became dull and finally died. The fractured thoracics was confirmed in the necropsy.

The blood samples were sent to Central University Lab, TANUVAS and the samples were negative for any haemagglutinating virus.

REFERENCE


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*See Image 1 on the web at www.zoosprint.org*