1944

Fractured Atlas in a Horse

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Fractured Atlas in a Horse. The position and structure of the atlas with relation to the brain stem and spinal cord is such that its injury may readily produce symptoms of a severe central nervous disorder.

The case of interest was a gray 13-year-old gelding which was brought to the Stange Memorial Clinic June 9, 1944. While being trucked to the clinic to have a foot examined, the animal's head struck a low bridge. The horse was riding with his head facing opposite the direction of travel, so he was struck in the region of the atlanto-occipital articulation. Upon arrival at the clinic a unilateral paralysis had been established. The region of the atlas was severely bruised on the right side causing considerable swelling and some hemorrhage. A tentative diagnosis of fracture or severe injury to the atlas was made.

Post Mortem

During the night, the patient became delirious, leading to considerable automutilation, especially about the region of the head. The paralysis had become bilateral making it impossible for the animal to rise. Euthanasia was indicated and employed to prevent further automutilation.

A post-mortem examination proved the cervical region to be swollen from edema and hemorrhage. About 500 cc. of blood were removed from a 1 cm. opening inflicted in the skin over the right wing of the atlas. There was a hemorrhagic infiltration of all the soft tissues of the region.

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There was a comminuted transverse fracture of the anterior dorsal arch and right wing of the atlas. The spinal canal and arachnoid space of the spinal cord was filled with blood. The fracture of the atlas together with the initial edema and hemorrhage caused the unilateral paralysis exhibited when the patient first arrived at the clinic. As the hemorrhage surrounded the cord, the paralysis had become bilateral.

A brain involvement was ruled out in the clinical diagnosis as the cause of the paralysis because injury to the brain has its effect reflected on the side of the body opposite the injury. Hence, the injury on the right side would have caused the unilateral paralysis to be registered on the left side.

—L. E. Bartelt, '45

Prostatitis in the dog. Prostatitis is an inflammation of the prostate gland. This disease when found in the dog is nearly always of a subacute or chronic type.

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