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An Extraskeletal Osteosarcoma

by

Joseph Bryan*

On August 5, 1970, an eight-year-old Collie was admitted into Stange Memorial Clinic with a growth on the thorax adjacent to the right leg. The subcutaneous mass was very hard and about 7 cm. in diameter.

Physical examination revealed enlarged external lymph nodes. The animal seemed normal in all other respects.

Radiographs were taken (latero-medial and ventro-dorsal of the thorax) and a radio-opaque mass was seen without any connections to the skeleton.

Laboratory results were:

- Hb: 17.4 Gm. %
- PCV: 52%
- RBC: 7,680,000/mm.³
- WBC: 12,400/mm.³
- Seg Neutro: 87%
- Eosino: 2%
- Lympho: 9%
- Mono: 2%
- Platelets: Adeq.
- BUN: 11 mg. %
- Alk. Phos.: 46 I.U. (increased)

On August 6, 1970, surgery was performed. A well encapsulated mass was removed. A routine closure was made and a drainage tube was incorporated into the wound. The animal was discharged on August 13, 1970.

Three weeks later the owner telephoned and informed the clinician that another mass had appeared in the same place on his dog. The owner's local veterinarian euthanized the dog at the owner's request.

A histopathologist reported that the mass was an osteosarcoma. While an osteosarcoma is usually associated with bone, it is possible to see one that is not. This case illustrates a fact to remember. All neoplasms should be handled as if they were malignant. Advise the client of this assumption. Advising the owner that a neoplasm appears to be benign, only to have the animal succumb to metastatic lesions, may cause a client to lose trust in his veterinarian. Any tumor removed from an animal should be identified by a histopathologist. Then, both the veterinarian and his client know what prognosis to expect. Would you expect any less from your own personal physician?

“The first tools used in surgical procedures were of stone. Long after metals were in use, the stone knife remained as a tradition. The Egyptians used a stone knife for the primary incision in the embalming process, and the Jews for circumcision. Stone arrowheads found in Scotland and Ireland were believed by rural peoples to be fairy darts and were mounted in silver for use as charms. When cattle fell ill, the fairy doctor was called in to suck out the darts believed to be the cause of the illness. The imaginary darts were put in a pail of water for the cow to drink.”

Taken from *Evolution of the Veterinary Art*, by J. F. Smithcors, Veterinary Medicine Publishing Co., Kansas City, Missouri, 1957, p. 8.

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