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Infantile Penis in the Canine

by

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Dr. Donald DeYoung*

Summary

An eleven-month-old intact male Doberman with infantile penis, phimosis, and resultant urine burns to the preputial mucosa was surgically corrected by shortening the prepuce and correcting the phimosis, allowing normal extrusion of the penis on urination.

Introduction

Infantile or micropenis is the presence of an abnormally small penis in relation to body size. The penis is usually normally proportioned and there are no female characteristics as seen in intersexual individuals. This condition is usually congenital but can be secondary to hyperestrogenism in later life, as a result of prepuberal neutering, Sertoli cell tumors, or administration of exogenous estrogen.

Micropenis in human cases has been shown to be associated with underlying genetic or hormonal defects, such as genotypic mosaic complexes, hypopituitarism, and hypothalamic defects (3, 4). Also in man, multiple congenital anomalies, often severe or fatal, can be found concurrent with micropenis. In one study, 65 percent of individuals with infantile penis had one or more of these anomalies: imperforate anus, tracheo-esophageal fistula, vesicocolonic fistula, dwarfishms, absent kidney with contralateral hydronephrosis, and others (2).

Infantile penis is reported most frequently in some of the larger breeds of dogs, especially the Great Dane and Collie (1).

Case Report

A seven-month-old intact male Doberman was referred† to the Stange Memorial Clinic, Iowa State University on 6 May 1976. The owners reported that the dog dripped urine continually and showed dysuria and hematuria. The dog had been treated by the referring veterinarian for a preputial infection with marginal success. On examination the dog was found to have an abnormally small penis with a normal sized prepuce, which contained a greenish exudate. The preputial opening also was smaller than normal. The testicles, especially the right, were smaller and softer than normal. Culture of the preputial exudate was negative. Infantile penis, phimosis and chronic urine burns to the prepuce were diagnosed. Since the dog was young, it was decided to treat symptomatically and wait to see if the penis would enlarge during further growth and the onset of puberty. Accordingly, Forte mastitis tubes were dispensed for treating the prepuce and the dog was released.

The dog returned on 15 June 1976, for reevaluation. There was no noticeable penile growth and the problems with urination persisted. An appointment for surgery was made and more Forte mastitis ointment was dispensed.

The dog was admitted for surgery on 7 September 1976. Preoperative blood values (CBC, BUN, SGPT) were normal. Surgery was performed on 9 September. A V-shaped wedge was excised from the dorsal aspect of the preputial ring. Skin and mucosa were sutured together with 2-0 Prolene, thus increasing the diameter of the preputial opening. A rectangular block of tissue was excised from the prepuce just distal to the fornix (see Figure 1), leaving approximately a 3 cm. gap in the length of the prepuce. This gap was closed with 2-0 Dexon in the mucosal layer and 2-0 Prolene in the skin layer, shortening the prepuce so that the tip of the penis was 5 mm. proximal from the preputial ring.
Postoperatively, the prepuce was infused with Forte mastitis ointment three times a day to prevent infection. Swelling plus sutures in the preputial ring prevented normal urination for three days postoperatively; once the swelling had dissipated urination was normal. Sutures were removed on 17 September. A 2.5 cm. segment which dehisced at this time was repaired with 3-0 stainless steel. The dog was released 18 September, and the steel sutures were removed 2 October.

Discussion

In humans afflicted with micropenis, testosterone given orally, topically or both is the treatment of choice, with fairly good chances of increasing penis size somewhat, although not completely to normal proportions (2, 5). However, since the owners of this dog had no intention of breeding it and the patient's psychological state is of no concern unlike that of human patients, there was no need to attempt to increase penis size. Shortening the prepuce was the simplest and most effective method of allowing the dog to function normally.

Micropenis plus hypoglycemia in humans, often associated with undescended testicles, is presumptive evidence of hypopituitarism (3). Blood glucose determinations were not made on this dog. However, most untreated human cases of hypopituitarism are in critical condition by 4 to 5 months of age or less due to cortisol insufficiency (Addison's Disease) (3). This dog is healthy and active at twice that age, and does not show any of the outward hypoadrenalism signs (low blood pressure and volume, feeble heart action, weakness, shock, and usually severe gastrointestinal malfunctions).

The same reasoning can be applied to the possibilities of other congenital abnormalities occurring concurrently with the infantile penis; they are usually obvious, life threatening, or fatal. Since they have not been noticed it is good evidence that this dog has micropenis alone or concurrently with a benign anomaly.

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