

Leveraging behavioural science to address pet obesity

Thomas Webb, 11th October 2022

Recent estimates suggest that up to 6 in 10 dogs and cats are overweight or obese (Bomberg et al, 2017), and the level of overweight and obese companion animals has been described as an "epidemic" (Kipperman and German, 2018). Risk factors for obesity among companion dogs are multifactorial and include factors pertaining to the dog (such as genetics, breed, neutered status, age, sex, and responsiveness to food). However, owners typically control food intake among companion animals and can also moderate energy expenditure (Association for Pet Obesity Prevention, 2014). Therefore, growing interest exists in programmes that explicitly target owners' behaviour, either as part of a multi-component intervention (for example, alongside a nutritional recommendation) or as its primary focus; placing a strong emphasis on supporting owners to take preventive action to reduce the risk of pet obesity

Point of care pancreas-specific lipase testing is focus for study

Alex Gough, 17th October 2022

Point of care pancreas-specific lipase tests are useful for rapid diagnosis of pancreatitis in dogs, but it is possible that false positives may be recorded with other conditions. Gastrointestinal foreign body obstructions have similar clinical signs to pancreatitis, so it is important to know whether false positive results are found with pancreas-specific lipase tests in cases of obstruction without pancreatitis. Luce et al¹ included 50 dogs with acute abdomen syndrome in a prospective observational cohort study. Twenty-five dogs with gastrointestinal foreign bodies were compared to 25 controls without gastrointestinal foreign bodies. Dogs with evidence of pancreatitis were excluded from the study. All dogs had SNAP canine pancreatic lipase (cPL) tests performed within 24 hours of presentation and before any surgical procedures were performed. No significant difference was observed in the number of positive cPL results between the two groups. Abnormal cPL results were more likely to be seen in older dogs. The authors concluded that cPL results are largely accurate but can be abnormal in a small number of dogs with gastrointestinal foreign bodies and recommend abdominal imaging in all dogs with abnormal cPL results

Long term treatment of fear and anxiety-based sound sensitivity

Emma Baker, Emma Brown; 11th October 2022

Working methodically from first principles is the most thorough approach. The principles of a behaviour consultation are outlined and applied to a sound sensitivity case below. Identify the triggers for the negative emotional state/unwanted behaviour the client is reporting. For many sound-sensitive cases, this is straightforward as the client will also hear the noise just before their pet reacts. As a pet becomes more sensitised to sounds, it may also react to stimuli that predict the arrival of those sounds, such as darkness in the evening before a firework display or changes in electrostatic pressure before a thunderstorm. Some triggers for unwanted behaviour do not initially seem related to a fear of noise. Cases may present as an owner-absent issue if a dog was frightened by a loud noise while alone. The animal can associate the noise with being isolated and become fearful of being left. Conversely, if a dog has a pre-existing separation-related problem, and a loud noise occurs while it is already alone and distressed, having no owner as a coping strategy can sensitise the animal to the noise more quickly. Cases also exist that present for reactivity directed at their owners, which, during anamnesis, we learn is triggered when the owners attempt to move it from a hiding place or thwart its noise-fear coping strategy in other ways

VIVALDIS CORNER

Vivaldis is organising a series of seminars across the country to focus on 'The Significance of Therapeutic Nutrition in Small Animals'

The first 2 such seminars were held at Mumbai at Hotel Sahara Star on 12th October and in Bangalore at Hotel JW Marriott on 16th October.

The speakers were Dr. Yathiraj from Bangalore, the former Dean of Veterinary College, Bangalore, and Dr. Karunakaran, the Dean of Madras Veterinary College, Chennai. The event was attended by over 180 veterinarians from Mumbai and Bangalore. The next seminars will be scheduled at Pune, Kolkata, and Delhi in November



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