Veterinarians Are Top Blood Donors

Dec 19, 1980

Dear Sir:

In the calendar year 1980, our community average of eligible blood donors actually donating blood was about 1%.

However, 2 groups of veterinarians and staff had 100% participation, 5 times, giving them D-500 status. This is the best participation that can be achieved in this blood region, since only 5 donations per year are allowed. To the best of our knowledge, this is not only a first ever for the county, but also for the region, the state of New York, and the United States.

We would appreciate it very much if you would recognize these 2 groups of veterinarians and staff, perhaps by a letter. If you give certificates for outstanding community service, that would be appropriate.

The 2 groups are: Homer Animal Clinic (which was the first), William P. Cadwallader, Jr, DVM, 66 S West St, Homer, NY 13077, and Cortland Animal Hospital (following within minutes!), Edward F. Steinfeldt, DVM, West Rd and Madison, Cortland, NY 13045.

Mardell Edelstein
The American Red Cross
Cortland, NY 13045

Therapy of Demodicosis in Snow Leopard Challenged

Jan 15, 1981

Dear Sir:

This is in regard to the clinical report (JAVMA, Nov 1, pp 896–898) by Kenneth C. Fletcher entitled “Demodicosis in a Group of Juvenile Snow Leopards.” While we are pleased that the cubs are no longer afflicted, we do have some questions regarding the therapy employed.

First, the choice of amoxicillin as an antibiotic in the treatment of Staphylococcus aureus pyodermas may have certain drawbacks. Extrapolating from canine data, there is at least an 80% chance this bacteria is a penicillinase producer; amoxicillin is not penicillinase-resistant and thus is likely to be ineffective. A more appropriate antibiotic would have been oxacillin or one of the macrolides. More than likely the povidone scrubs and solutions were the effective antimicrobial agents in the cub so treated.

Second, while lime sulfur is a safe topical medication for cats,3 it has been shown to be ineffective in canine demodicosis.4 The acaracidal solution does not penetrate the hair follicle where the mites reside. Although the mites are transmitted from the dam to her neonatal offspring,5 the
LETTERS—from page 877
disease process is not contagious; therefore, the treatment of the unaffected cubs was unnecessary.

The condition described parallels canine and feline localized demodicosis. This usually occurs in young animals and resolves itself spontaneously in over 90% of cases, regardless of the type of therapy. Although the data presented in the article are new and interesting, we feel the author's premise that the treatment effected the cure should not go unchallenged.

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Public Health Aspects of Roundworms

Jan 26, 1981

Dear Sir:

Not in 21 years of practice has an article in JAVMA affected me as much as the one entitled "Veterinary and Public Health Considerations in Canine Roundworm Control: A Survey of Practicing Veterinarians," by Drs. Arnold Kornblatt and Peter Schantz (Dec 15, 1980, p 1212).

This article implied some very serious consequences of human exposure to canine roundworm ova. I had been led to believe that the danger of human infection called visceral larval migrans was insignificant and, even if contacted, caused little or no harm. In reviewing my school parasitology notes, the subject was covered in 1 short paragraph. My colleague and associate, a 1978 graduate, also could not recall any major significance being placed on this zoonosis. His parasitology notes, although expanded to 2 paragraphs, did mention the disease and some public health dangers, but the disease was not emphasized.

Last fall the NBC television news program "60 Minutes" had a program on dog parasites transferable to man. I spent a great deal of time reassuring clients that they had nothing to worry about as long as they practiced good hygienic routines with their dogs and with the dogs' feces. As a result of the JAVMA article, I sent for a reprint from the American Journal of Diseases of Children (June 1978) entitled "Visceral Larva Migrans, A Review and Reassessment Indicating Two Forms of Clinical Expression: Visceral and Ocular," by Dr. William Zinkham. This author states "Reasons for the current image of visceral larva migrans as an illness of infrequent occurrence are unclear." It goes on to mention difficulties in defining parasites in tissue, diagnostic methods, prejudices, traditional concepts of worms and man, and climactic and environmental beliefs. Not mentioned but obviously a factor is the dearth of knowledge among and indifference attached to the disease by veterinarians. I point the finger at myself and many of my fellow practitioners who are on the firing line, but the ultimate finger must be pointed at our veterinary schools, parasitology departments, the government public health departments, our veterinary research facilities, and last but certainly the most important are the veterinary literature sources. A case in point.

An increasingly important zoonosis that I have run about repeatedly in the last few months is that of human plague from bites of fleas harbored on students and sometimes on pets. The veterinary news media and literature have kept us adequately informed about this disease while almost completely ignoring a much more common disease, visceral larval migrans in children, coming from dog and cat roundworms Toxocara canis and T suis, respectively.

I agree completely with the authors, who state that "Veterinary awareness of the public health aspects of toxocariasis is needed before the owning public can be educated." Whether we live in Atlanta, where almost half of retinal diseases in children are related to ocular larval migrans, or New York, where many eyes were enucleated in children because of an intraocular tumor that was really larval migrans, we must become informed so that we can adequately inform our clients. I challenge the AVMA and all who are in a position to educate veterinarians and veterinary students about the public health aspects of such a common condition as toxocariasis, which is confronted daily in our practices.

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Pregnancy Toxemia in a Bitch

Jan 26, 1981

Dear Sir:

I read with great interest Dr. R. F. Jackson's article "Hypoglycemia-Ketonemia in a Pregnant Bitch" in JAVMA, Dec 1, 1980, p 1123–1127. In attempting to refute the analogy between pregnancy toxemia in ewes and this bitch, the statement was made that "there was no known stress on the mother". Continued on page 878