

CLINICOPATHOLOGIC FEATURES OF DOGS AND CATS PRESENTED TO A CARDIORESPIRATORY REFERRAL INSTITUTION DIAGNOSED WITH ACUTE TOXOPLASMOSIS. N. Van Israël, Animal CardioPulmonary Consultancy (ACAPULCO), Masta, Belgium

*Toxoplasma gondii* infects nearly all warm-blooded animals and the consequences of its passage in the intermediate (eg. dog) and definitive host (cat) have often been underestimated. The objective of this study was to retrospectively describe the clinical and pathological features, with an emphasis on the cardiorespiratory system, in a large population with naturally occurring Toxoplasmosis. Acute Toxoplasmosis was defined as animals having positive IgM titers or a fourfold seroconvalescence of IgG titers over a 3-4 week period (as determined by IFA or ELISA techniques). Forty-seven dogs and 5 cats fulfilled the criteria. There was no specific breed or gender predisposition. The age range was wide (cats: 5-14y median 5.5y; dogs: 4m-10y median 4.8y). Anorexia and lethargy were the main presenting signs in cats, were in dogs 61 % were exercise intolerant, 53 % experienced breathlessness, 23 % coughed and 23 % were syncopal. On electrocardiography AV-block was present in 6 dogs (3 first, 1 second, 2 third degree), V-arrhythmias in 9 dogs and supraventricular arrhythmias in 5 dogs (2 AF, 1 atrial flutter, 2 SVT). Radiographic findings ranged from pulmonary (broncho-interstitial patterns (5) and alveolar 'aspiration' infiltrates (2)) to cardiac pathology (cardiomegaly (5) and congestive heart failure (3)) but was normal in 21/35 sets of RX available. Echocardiography was normal in 25/48 animals and showed signs that might have been consistent with myocarditis in only 9/48 animals. Two dogs had developed pericardial and one pleural effusion. A neutrophilia was the most frequent hematological abnormality (15%), followed by a mildly elevated HCT (11%). Elevated liver enzymes was the most common biochemical finding (35) followed by increased CPK in 5/52. Toxoplasmosis IgM titers at initial presentation (1/40-1/640 median 1/60) were elevated in all but 1 cat that seroconverted (IgG) over a 3 week period. It could take up to 16 months for complete disappearance of the IgM titers with a median of 5 months. In two dogs the titers were re-activated over time. Troponin I levels were available in 25 dogs and elevated in 10 (range 0.34-14.5). Proteinuria at initial presentation was a feature in only 3 dogs and 1 cat. Final clinical diagnosis consisted of myocarditis in 17 animals, hepatopathy in 4, tracheobronchitis/pneumonitis/pneumonia in 7, pericarditis, chorioretinitis and PLNP in 2, laryngeal paralysis in 3 (accompanied with megaesophagus in 2), pleuritis, polyarthritis, polymyopathy and sialadenitis respectively in 1. Nearly all animals were treated with clindamycine as first choice, S/TMP or doxycycline were the second choice. Three dogs died suddenly during their treatment and 9 were euthanized (3 cats) for complications of the disease, making this disease not as inoffensive as widely described.