TWO CASES OF LYMPHOID LEUCOSIS IN SNAKES

Twee gevallen van lymfoïde leucose bij slangen

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ABSTRACT

Two Yellow Anacondas (Eunectes notaeus) were diagnosed with lymphoid leucosis after a history of anorexia. One snake presented a large tumoral mass in the intestinal wall; the other had several smaller neoplasms in different organs. Reptilian tumors are being diagnosed more frequently in recent decades.

SAMENVATTING

Bij twee Gele Anaconda’s (Eunectes notaeus) werd lymfoïde leucose vastgesteld. Eén slang had een grote tumor in de darmwand en de andere verschillende kleinere gezwellen in verscheidene organen. Tumoren bij reptielen worden de laatste tientallen jaren frequenter gediagnosticeerd.

INTRODUCTION

Reports of neoplasms in reptiles are becoming more frequent, probably due to more routine examination and the increasing life expectancy of the animals in the last two decades. Cowan (1968) reported 10 animals out of 1249 (0.8%) with tumors and Effron et al. (1977) 27 out of 1233 (2.19%), whereas Hubbard et al. (1983) reported 3.5% (5/143) and Griner (1983) 4.3% (30/690). According to Zwart (1987), reptile tumors involve first of all the digestive tract, secondly the hemopoietic system and thirdly the skin. Done (1996) described 21 neoplasms of the hemopoietic system amongst 156 tumors in snakes (13.5%), but Katao-Dias and Nichols (1999) found only 4.1% of tumors to be of lymphoid and hematopoietic tissues (12/291).

CASE DESCRIPTION

A male Yellow Anaconda (Eunectes notaeus), estimated to be 15 years old, had anorexia for several months. On examination the animal, weighing 1.260 kg, was lethargic and presented an abdominal swelling approximately 10 cm cranially of the cloaca. This swelling was oval, firm on palpation and well circumscribed. It was not movable. Radiography revealed a radiodense intra-abdominal mass of about 5 cm in diameter with a uniform structure. Surgery under general anesthesia was performed and an intestinal wall tumor was removed by enterectomy. Six weeks after the intervention the snake died. At necropsy a peritonitis and intestinal constriction was detected; also renal and hepatic gout was observed.

Two weeks later a second Yellow Anaconda, a female of about 5 years of age and weighing 0.7 kg, died. This animal had shared a cage with the former one. It died with the same history of anorexia. On necropsy, multiple tumoral masses of different sizes (ranging from a few mm to one cm in diameter along the intestinal tract and in the liver were observed.

Neoplasms of both animals were histopathologically diagnosed as lymphoid leucosis. The tumoral mass of the intestinal wall of the first animal had no lobulated structure, but consisted of a collagen fiber matrix filled with the tumor cells. There was more morphological variation of the nuclei, which appeared either very dark or light and inflated. The hepatic tumoral mass of the second animal was embedded in loose connective tissue and divided with connective tissue septae into several lobuli. An architectural pattern was absent in these lobuli, which measured between 0.5 and 1 cm in diameter and consisted of a monomorphic cell population. The tumoral cells
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REFERENCES


