

# The Minutes of the meeting of the Derby Medical Society

Held on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2015 in the Derby Medical School

**Apologies:** Dr Helen Lever

**Welcome:** Dr J Charlton, President.

**Minutes for the meeting 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015:** Read by Mr S Milner, Junior Secretary, and approved.

**Guest Lecture:** Kate Griffiths, Assistant Professor of Veterinary Dermatology, University of Nottingham – “Spotty dogs and crusty cats – dermatology from a veterinary perspective”

In General Veterinary Practice, approximately 25% of all consultations are for dermatological problems, the single most common group of problems. Veterinary dermatology is a relatively young speciality, which deals with the skin and its integumental adaptations (hooves, horns, claws, beaks, scales and hair). The majority of work is in dogs and cats, and problems in part have resulted from selective breeding from a shallow gene pool.

Pruritus is the most common symptom, although this presents differently in different animals. Dogs tend to scratch and chew, whereas cats present with 4 distinct cutaneous reaction patterns (head and neck pruritus, overgrooming, eosinophilic granuloma, military dermatitis). Diagnostic detective work usually leads to a diagnosis in one of 4 main groups:

- Parasites – eg fleas. Infested pets sometimes develop an allergic dermatitis on their back. £141m per year is spent on flea treatments for pets.
- Hypersensitivities – either environmental (atopic) or food-induced. Some breeds of dog are prone to atopic dermatitis, usually on their paws and inguinal region. Patch testing against known allergens can lead to successful immunotherapy. Food allergies can be very difficult to diagnose, requiring strict exclusion diets.
- Infections – eg dermatophytoses, Leishmaniasis, cowpox.
- Others

Treatment depends on the underlying diagnosis, efficacy of medical treatments available, the animal's temperament, the owner's physical constraints, and the cost. Some medical treatments are very expensive and not fully covered by pet insurance. For example, ciclosporin treatment for atopic eczema in a large dog can cost £400 per month. Physical methods of protection such as collars, claw covers and coats can prevent further skin damage.

Horses sometime suffer from 'sweet itch', a type I / type IV hypersensitivity reaction to midge bites around the mane and tail. Urticaria can be seen in response to drugs or insect bites, or exercise-induced. Grey horses are particularly prone to malignant melanomas, and squamous cell carcinomas are also seen.

Farm animals tend to be seen less in veterinary practice than pets, because of the economic implications. However, some conditions are economically important, such as Foot & Mouth disease, sheep scab, blue tongue, orf, papilloma virus, and photosensitisation reactions.

Exotic species are also seen from time to time. Reptiles suffer burns from heat lamps because they do not seem to feel heat. Dysecdysis refers to problems associated with skin shedding.

Guinea pigs can develop flank alopecia secondary to ovarian cysts. Sometimes these are up to 8cm in diameter, and are treated with surgical removal.

Birds lose feathers, and this may be stress-related self-mutilation or inflicted by others. The key is whether the bird's head feathers are affected. Birds of prey can get foot ulcers as a result of pressure from prolonged perching.

Questions included:

- The effect of psychological problems in animals on skin disorders
- The incidence of psoriasis in animals
- Diagnosing conditions that can be transmitted from owners to pets or vice versa
- Antibiotic stewardship in veterinary practice
- Skin neoplasia in animals

**Vote of thanks:** given by Dr Tanya Bleiker

**Register:** signed by 28 members, 1 guest and 2 students

**Next meeting:** 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016

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Date:

Dr J Charlton, President