

## CONSERVATIVE MANAGEMENT OF SIMPLE TIBIAL FRACTURE IN A WHITE TIGER CUB

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A white tiger cub, Kunti, aged about one year and weighing approximately 40kg at Nandankanan Zoo inflicted injury to its right hind limb when it fell from top of its wire-net enclosure. The animal was unable to bear its weight on the affected limb and a swelling above the hock joint was noticed.

After restraining the cub in a squeeze cage, a mixture of Xylazine hydrochloride (Xylazil) 50mg and Ketamine hydrochloride (Ketamil) 50mg was injected intramuscularly. The cub was taken out after 10 minutes to take a radiograph of the affected region. It was found to have a transverse fracture with proximal segment being impacted into distal segment at the distal third of tibia. The fractured leg was immobilised using four well-padded bamboo splints with a thick layer of cotton and retained in place by leukoplast from stifle joint up to the foot. However, the animal removed all the splints and bandages within 24 hours.

The cub was shifted to a small enclosure of about 10m radius having five-inch thick sand floor. Powdered oral calcium tablets in beef was given to the cub for two months. After three months the cub started bearing weight on the affected limb and was able to walk normally.

Treatment of wild animals poses problem to veterinarians especially in preventing self mutilation as it happened in the present case. Since the fracture was a stabilized one and had no external wound, conservative management was thought to be proper.

Confinement of tiger to a very small enclosure restricted its movement. In the present case the sand floor minimized concussive forces on the digits during walking thereby providing stabilization of fractured ends, which healed in three months. The normal digitigrade foot stance was observed in the cub after three months.



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