

RELATIONSHIP OF AGE WITH BODY WEIGHT IN ORPHANED LEOPARD CUBS

B.B. Shukla¹, Rakesh Kumar², A.K. Upadhyay²,
S.K. Shukla², V.P. Dixit² and Mahesh Kumar²

¹ Veterinary Officer, Veterinary clinics Nohta, Damoh District, Madhya Pradesh 6

² Department of Veterinary Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, College of Veterinary Sciences, G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar, Uttaranchal 263145, India.

Newborn leopard cubs are totally dependent on their dam for first few weeks of life. Therefore, care of orphaned newborn cubs is an exacting task and success depends on a thorough observation and careful adoption of hygienic measures. Three orphaned leopard cubs (two females and one male) 2-3 days old were brought to the veterinary clinic in Dantewada (Chhattisgarh). Cubs weighed 340g (male) and 320 and 280g (2 female cubs). Their eyes were closed and appeared dehydrated. Body temperatures were recorded as normal (32^oC). They were 2-3 days old as their eyes were closed and opened after 7-8 days. On clinical examination, no physical injury and congenital defects were detected. These cubs were kept in a well cleaned room with proper ventilation besides, entry to the room was restricted. Umbilicus was disinfected with povidone iodine to avoid any naval infection. Lytren's warmed oral electrolyte, glucose* solution was given to them as a first meal (Benshaul, 1962)

To relieve dehydration, cubs were given electrolytes and glucose** (C.I.V.I., 2001) using nipples at hourly interval, supplemented with liver tonic (Liv-52 syrup) and vitamin supplements (ABDEC drops). Feeding frequency was eight times per day for first three weeks followed by five times a day up to eight weeks of age and then thrice a day for the rest of the period (Meier, 1986).

Cubs were fed with a mixture of cow's milk and egg yolk (Cows milk - 210ml; egg yolk - 15 ml; multivitamins - 2 drops) as per Mapletoff *et al.*, (1974). One female cub developed gastroenteritis and revealed symptoms of anorexia, severe diarrhoea and vomiting which resulted in dehydration and died at the age of four weeks.

* Lytren's solution (manufactured by Mead Johnson, USA) provides 0.28 calories per ml instant energy, 7% carbohydrate, 30mEq/L sodium, 25 mEq/L potassium, 80 mg/L calcium, 84 mg/L phosphorus; ** Electral powder is marketed by FDC and contains potassium chloride (300mg), sodium chloride (250mg), sodium citrate (580mg) and dextrose (5.4g) in each 7g sachet.

Male cub weighed 450g and female 390g at the age of one month. After one month, thoroughly boiled homogenous soup of mutton was also provided @ 100g thrice a day along with feeding with milk (Meier, 1986). Body growth of cubs was satisfactory as male attained a weight of 600g and female 525g. At the age of two months the cubs were allowed to take soft pieces of sterilized and boneless mutton.

These cubs were reared up to six months during which periodical body profiles were taken. All the body parameters were recorded and found within normal range. There was continuous increase in the body weight of both the cubs (Table 1) during the period of their rearing.

References

- Anon (2001). *Current Indian Veterinary Index* 2(1): 565pp.
Benshaul, D.M. (1962). Notes on hand-rearing various species of mammals. *International Zoo Year Book* 4: 282-342.
Mapletoff, R.J., A.P. Schutt, R.L. Coubrough and R.J. Kunhe (1974). The perinatal period of dogs. Nutrition and management in the hand-rearing of puppies. *Journal of South African Veterinary Association* 45: 183-189.
Meier, J.E. (1986). *Neonatology and hand rearing of carnivores*, pp.842-852. In: Fowler, M.E. (ed.). *Zoo and Wild Animal Medicine*, 2nd edition. W.B. Saunders Co., Philadelphia.

Table 1. Age and body weight relation in leopard cubs

| Age | Body weight of cubs (g) | |
|---------|-------------------------|------|
| | Female | Male |
| 2 days | 340 | 320 |
| 1 month | 450 | 390 |
| 2 month | 600 | 525 |
| 3 month | 850 | 800 |
| 4 month | 1050 | 950 |
| 5 month | 1500 | 1300 |
| 6 month | 3250 | 2750 |

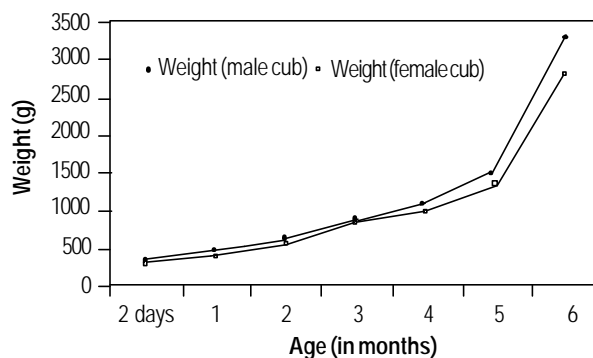


Figure 1. Age and body weight relationship in Leopard cubs