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SURGICAL MANAGEMENT OF EXTENSIVE HAEMORRHAGE IN THE LIP OF A LION

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web supplement

Wounds of different types are common in wild animals. Most of them go unnoticed and are difficult to treat because of problems in restraining animals. Bleeding wounds need special attention as they may result in haemorrhagic shock and even death. The possible etiological factors attributed for haemorrhage in caged animals are hitting against iron bars, sharp projections, foreign bodies (thorns, metallic agents causing damage to superficial blood vessels), fighting among themselves etc,. Any negligence in treating these types of injuries leads to major complications like sepsis, shock, and death. A case of deep-seated wound with extensive haemorrhages at labial aspect of lower lip in a lion and its surgical management is presented in this study.

Case history: A nine-year-old lion was presented with spurts of bleeding from lips. The ground area in the cage was soiled with blood and blood clots. Physical examination up close revealed no external injury. The lion was given Chromostat (Adrenochrome monosemicarbazone) @ 4ml intramuscularly and two Styptocid (adrenochrome monosemicarbazone) tablets along with B-Complex electrolytes mixed in meat orally. The animal was isolated and fed with beef and there was no bleeding. Next day evidence of spurts of bleeding was noticed. The same treatment was continued for two more days. As there was no improvement surgical intervention was opted for.

Anesthesia and surgery: The animal was sedated with Xylaxine hydrochloride (200mg) and Ketamine hydrochloride (400mg) combination using a blowpipe. The lion showed vomition initially and was positioned in lateral recumbancy. The site of bleeding was identified on labial surface of lower lip. It was prepared for surgery. The bleeding points were identified. Ligatures at anterior and posterior aspects of the bleeding points corresponding to the direction of labial artery were applied using 1/0 chromic catgut (Image 1[w]). To help vasoconstriction Adrenaline was applied locally. After ensuring proper haemostasis Tincture Benzoin seal was applied to stop haemorrhage.

Treatment: The lion was given Ringer's lactate-1lt i/v along with 5ml Dexamethasone to combat fluid loss during sedation and Chromostat* 4ml was given i/m. Electrolytes, Glucose and B-Complex vitamins were given orally along with drinking water for five days. The ligated areas were dressed with Betadine spray for five days. The animal was fed regular diet without any complication.

Conclusion: Xylazine and Ketamine combinations produce satisfactory anesthesia in wild animals for performing different surgical operations. Schulman *et al.* (2003) performed surgical excision of cutaneous fibro papilloma in a mountain lion. In this case the bleeding could have happened due to small pointed object. The animal was in a habit of rubbing its face against the bars of the cage and other hard objects. This might have resulted in this condition and repeated trauma lead to extensive haemorrhage.

As the lion was a rescued animal, kept in dark conditions (without power supply), wild and aggressive in nature, its occurrence and treatment attracted special interest. It is advised to avoid iron traps and pegs (in any form) to prevent accidental injuries and rubbing.

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[w] see Image 1 in the web supplement at www.zoosprint.org

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