

ROTTWEILER DOGS VS. *OTODECTES CYNOTIS*: EMERGENCE OF NEUROLOGIC MANIFESTATIONS OF PARASITIC EAR INFECTIONS

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Dogs are predisposed to ear problems due to factors such as the anatomy of the external ear canal, the morphology of the ear pinna in some breeds and inattentiveness of owners towards ear-cleaning. The ear mite, *Otodectes cynotis*, commonly infests the external ear canal and surrounding skin in dogs and cats. Common signs of otocariasis include copious production of characteristic coffee ground-like malodorous cerumen, pruritus of the ears and shaking of the head. However, 10% of dogs with ear mite infestation do not exhibit clinical signs.

Three Rottweiler dogs were presented to Veterinary Teaching Hospital with neurological signs. All dogs were recumbent, but neurological signs differed in each patient. These signs included sensory neuropathy, in-coordination, head-tilting, circling and occasional seizures. Otoscopic and microscopic examinations were performed on the exudates of the ear canals in order to confirm *O. cynotis* infestation and the dogs were treated for otocariasis. Other neurological and systemic diseases were ruled out by clinical and laboratory findings. After initial treatment with ivermectin, topical antibiotic (ciprofloxacin) and antifungal medications (clotrimazole), systemic antibiotic therapy with cephalosporins and daily ear cleaning, all three dogs showed rapid recovery from the initial stage. In two cases methylprednisolone succinate and dexamethasone were used to minimise inflammatory damage to the nervous system. Head-tilting and circling was observed for a short period after recovery in one dog which was soon resolved.

Otocariasis, caused by *O. cynotis* is generally a mild condition in dogs and limited to otitis externa. Neurological manifestations with *O. cynotis* infestation are rare and finding this frequently in a particular breed is alarming. These findings highlights the fact that due consideration should be given for detailed examination of ears in dogs presented with neurological signs. Further research is needed to understand the mechanism of occurrence of neurological signs and to determine the prevalence of *O. cynotis* infestations in dogs in Sri Lanka.