

An alternative approach to cat's epilepsy treatment – Case report

O abordare alternativă în tratamentul epilepsiei la pisică – Prezentare de caz

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Abstract

Angel, a female British Shorthair cat, would be euthanized at the recommendation of three veterinarians, after she manifested epileptic seizures starting from seven months old. Due to her owner and one veterinarian love and effort, she well passed through many seizures and a non-regenerative anemia episode and she survived for five years from the onset of the disease. The mineral-vitamin supplements improved the life quality for four years and the homeopathic therapy successfully removed the seizures for one more year.

Rezumat

Angel, o pisică femelă din rasa British Shorthair, a primit recomandarea de eutanasiere din partea a trei medici veterinari, după ce a manifestat crize de epilepsie începând de la vârsta de șapte luni. Datorită proprietarului și a unui medic veterinar, pisica a supraviețuit mai multor crize epileptice și unui episod de anemie aregenerativă, pentru încă cinci ani de la declanșarea primei crize. Reacția adversă apărută în timpul utilizării fenobarbitalului a impus schimbarea conduitei terapeutice. Suplimentele mineralo-vitaminice și medicația homeopată au îmbunătățit calitatea vieții. Tratamentul alternativ a asigurat cu succes o viață normală pentru Angel, pentru încă un an.

Introduction

Epilepsy is a chronic neurologic disease that is difficult to be emphasized on cats, because of the secondary diseases (3, 5, 6), which assume a lot of investigation and a hard work from veterinarians and owners. In the last time, an increase of cat epilepsy cases was reported, due to the increase of the owner's interest for their pets and for their pet's clinical signs monitoring.

The paper aim is to offer another approach on the cat epilepsy management, in order to avoid euthanasia, in condition in which the usually specific drugs could not represent an option.

1. Material and methods

Angel, a British Shorthair female cat, was born on April 2003, together with other

seven kittens, following a difficult birth of 13 hours. The kittens were supplementary fed with cat specific powder milk for two months and after two months they received super premium category food. The vaccines and the antiparasitic treatments were made normally. Angel lived only indoor, together with another 10 cats and two dogs. She was a shy and dominated cat.



The onset of disease was at five months old, when the cat had manifested bruxism signs. The cat was sterilized on January 2004 and four months later the first seizure occurred. Starting from the first seizure, the owner noticed all clinical manifestations.

2. Results and discussion

The observation of the cat revealed different clinical signs, specific for all epileptic phases: prodromal stage, *ictus*, *post-ictus* and *inter-ictus* (3, 5, 6).

In the *prodromal stage* there were observed, for several hours, agitation and dromomania.

The *ictus phase* started suddenly, frequently during the sleep, and persisted for approximately 30 seconds. If the cat was awake, lateral falls could be observed, together with medication without food, hyper salivation, nystagmus and generalized tonic-clonic seizures. The crisis ended with urinary and/or faeces incontinence (sometimes) and prostration (frequently).

In the *post-ictus phase* it was noticed the fast returning to the normal healthy state, followed by a period of approximately 30 minutes during which the cat required attention and affection from the master.

The cat interacted with the other cats and dogs and, for several hours, she manifested polydipsia, increased appetite and she slept well.

In the *inter-ictus period* the cat was shy and secluded, she was sleeping or she was observing the animal community. Also, she was washing herself and sharpening her claws, she was eating and drinking water and she has urinated and defecated normally. Sometimes the cat has played alone, with her toys. She did not like to be hold in arms (normal for her breed).

Based on the clinical signs, the duration of phases, the inter-crisis comportment and the haematological and biochemical parameters (Table 1), four veterinarians appreciated that Angel was epileptic (idiopathic epilepsy).

Table 1.

Blood parameters evidence of Angel cat

Parameter	UM	Normal [*]	16.08.2005	03.09.2005	23.09.2005	19.10.2005	19.12.2005	02.02.2009
RBC	mil/mm ³	6-10	1,91	2,95	2,93	5,73	8,6	10,38
Haemoglobin	g/dl	9.5-15	5	5	5,6	33	14,3	14,3
Haematocrit	%	29-45	17,1	17,3	18,6	33	38,9	50,2
WBC	1000/mm ³	5.5-19.5	14,1	1,5	3,8	12,7	16,6	13,19
PLT	1000/mm ³	150-600	264	40	0,7	394	155	410
MCV	fl	41-54	90	60	-	58	45	48,4
MCH	pg	13.3-17.5	24,7	17,1	-	17,9	16,7	13,8
MCHC	%	31-36	28	21,6	-	31,1	36,8	28,5
Neutrophils	%	35-75	13	22	64	62	45	76
Lymphocytes	%	20-55	62	72	28	28	42	17
Monocytes	%	1-4	2	4	6	2	1	5
Eosinophils	%	2-12	2	2	2	8	12	2
Basophils	0-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reticulocytes	%	-	-	1	1	2	2	1
Triglycerides	mg/dl	20-90	-	-	-	-	-	162
Glucose	mg/dl	70-150	-	-	-	-	-	50
Urea	mg/dl	15-34	16,2	10,4	-	-	17,4	42
Creatinine	mg/dl	0.8-2.3	0,7	0,84	-	-	1,01	1,16
Cholesterol	mg/dl	82-218	-	-	-	-	-	172
ALAT/ALT	U/l	28-76	72,3	68,6	-	-	45	45
Amylase	U/l	500-1500	1850	1300	-	-	-	1278
Total proteins	g/l	59-85	87,2	90,2	-	-	71,6	82,8
Direct bilirubin	mg/dl	0-0.1	-	-	-	-	-	0,01
Total bilirubin	mg/dl	0-0.4	-	-	-	-	-	0,19
ALKP	U/l	0-62	16	-	-	-	88	43

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As the medical practice recommend (3, 6) the cat received phenobarbital as treatment, 2,5mg/Kg/q12h. The increase of seizures frequency, under treatment, led to the increase of the phenobarbital dose to 3,5mg/Kg/q12h.

According to the studies which underline the risk of the seizure occurrence in periodically vaccinated pets (7, 8), the decision to interrupt the vaccination protocol was taken (June 2005). For a short period of time the cat received interferon (immunostimulative) and enrofloxacin (due to an infection).

In August 2005, Angel manifested astasia, inapetence and dispnea. Blood investigation revealed physiological liver and kidney parameters and severe anemia (aregenerative). The emergency care was oxygen therapy (for 6-8 hours) and transfusion (from one of his brothers).

Taking into account the haematological disorders, the case history and the adverse effects of phenobarbital administration in pets (1, 2), the veterinarian and the owner decided to interrupt the treatment. After two months without phenobarbital, the blood values returned to normal (Table 1). Following this episode, three years regaining the healthy state the seizures occurred two or three times per month and the cat received only a vitamin-mineral complex (Natural Cat Daily).

In September 2008 the seizures recurred abruptly and it was decided to start a homeopathic cure with a plant tincture (Ease-Sure: *Passiflora incarnata*, *Scutellaria leterifolia*, *Hyoscyamus* 30C, *Belladonna* 30 and *Cuprum mettalicum* 30C), 2-3 drops/q12h.

After four months of tincture administration the seizures ceased and disappeared. After nine months of homeopathic treatment Angel regained the control of his state, was more active, affective and participative. Unfortunately, in sixth of May 2009 Angel died following a brain attack.

3. Conclusions

In case of Angel, the epileptic cat starting from seven months, the occurrence of anemia under phenobarbital treatment led to the interruption of therapy.

Due to the love and dedication of the caretakers the first option was the alternative therapy and not euthanasia. Starting from this moment the cat had four years of normal life, only with mineral-vitamin therapy. In the fifth year, thanks to the homeopathic therapy, there were no seizures.

The emphasized data entitle us to recommend the alternative therapy as a method to improve the life time and the life quality of the epileptic pet.

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