

CYSTICERCUS TENUICOLLIS METACESTODES IN FIVE ORYX SPECIES

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Introduction: *Cysticercus tenuicollis* (*C. tenuicollis*) is the larval stage (metacestode) of *Taenia hydatigena*, a tapeworm parasite of dogs and other canids (Senlik, 2008). The intermediate hosts of *T. hydatigena* are domestic and wild ruminants (Kara and Doganay, 2005). We report incidental findings of *Cysticercus tenuicollis metacestodes* encountered during necropsy examination of dead animals from five oryx species kept in Al Ain Zoo.

Materials and methods; This study was based on a retrospective analysis of post-mortem records covering a four year period (July 2010 to July 2014) in Al Ain Zoo. The zoo hosts five oryx species namely Arabian oryx (*Oryx leucoryx*), beisa oryx (*Oryx beisa*), fringe-eared oryx (*Oryx beisa callotis*), gemsbok (*Oryx gazelle*) and scimitar-horned oryx (*Oryx dammah*).

Results: A total of 12 out of 213 individuals (2 Arabian oryx, 3 beisa oryx, 1 fringe-eared oryx, 1 gemsbok and 5 scimitar-horned oryx) were recorded with *Cysticercus tenuicollis*, over the four year period, accounting for 5.6%. Only adult animals were identified with the metacestode with more females (8) than males (4) recorded but not statistically significant (p value 0.3737). The metacestodes were found attached to different organs as follows: lung (1), liver (1), liver and omentum (4), omentum (4) and mesentery (2).

Discussion: *Cysticercus tenuicollis* has been documented in Arabian oryx, beisa oryx and gemsbok but to the best of our knowledge it is the first time it is documented in fringe-eared oryx and scimitar-horned oryx. In the intermediate host, *C. tenuicollis* invades the liver and abdominal cavity causing considerable damage during larval migration, although in our study no pathology was reported. There is no zoonotic risk associated with this parasite. The mature tapeworm passes out eggs in faeces

of the host and are ingested by ruminant intermediate host. We postulate that the antelopes ingested eggs through contaminated alfalfa or hay that may have been contaminated by stray dogs or wild carnivores (fox).

Conclusion: Our study has shown that the five oryx species harboured *Cysticercus tenuicollis* but due to the paucity of information in the UAE wildlife, further research is recommended.

Reference will be available on the website
www.wmnews.com



REMOVAL OF RETAINED PLACENTA IN A GIRAFFE 14TH JULY 2013

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INTRODUCTION: One of the giraffe at Ain Wildlife Park & Resort (UAE), gave birth to a calf after a prolonged labour period. 72 hours after calving, she had not dropped the placenta and hence we had to intervene and remove it. Retained placenta on its own is not a problem, but it predisposes the cow to infection (metritis) which sometimes can be fatal if not addressed. When an animal with retained placenta defecates this contaminates the placenta and may be absorbed into the uterus. Also when the animal is lying down the retained placenta gets contaminated with the soil micro-organisms and this may lead to severe metritis and/or tetanus.

The thought of retained placenta and having veterinarians intervene was a major concern, as giraffe anaesthesia is very risky, especially as temperatures were in the high 40's Celcius (1220F). Fortunately, Al Ain Wildlife Park had acquired a new giraffe Tamer that coincidentally was fully installed the same day we wanted to manually remove the retained placenta.

Procedure: Capture –The giraffe was not conditioned to the Tamer procedure and as such, it was felt that it would take a long to bring her to the Tamer. Surprisingly, it took less than 3 minutes (Fig 1). Once in the Tamer, she was blindfolded to keep her calm (Fig 2). The exact body weight of the giraffe was taken with the aid of the inbuilt scales, which allowed the veterinary staff calculate the correct drug dosage for the animal.

Manual removal of placenta: To manually remove the placenta, the perineum was thoroughly washed with diluted povidone iodine. Wearing arm-long sleeves the hand was lubricated and inserted through the vagina into the uterus between the placenta and the uterine wall. By gently applying traction using one hand and the other hand into the uterus peeling off the placenta from the caruncle attachment, the placenta was removed carefully to avoid damaging the delicate lining of the uterus (endometrium). Thereafter, a sterile tube was lubricated and inserted into the uterus. Diluted povidone iodine was poured through the tube into the uterus (Fig 4). Then intra-uterine pessaries were inserted into the uterus.

Systemic treatment: Long-acting antibiotics were administered intramuscularly. The animal was also given Vitamin E and Selenium.

Blood taken during examination revealed low calcium levels and low vitamin E and selenium levels suggesting that the cause of the retained placenta was nutritional, mainly due to hypocalcaemia and Vitamin E and Selenium deficiency. Subsequently the animal was supplemented with calcium and Vitamin E and Selenium supplements.

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Dr Ahmed Shawki and Dr Tatiana Cavero putting the blindfold.