

June 21, 2010

Dear colleagues:

We have exciting news to report about a new treatment for a common health condition that you're likely seeing among your patients. The Veterinary Specialty Center recently purchased new laser equipment that will enable us to offer impressive new modalities to successfully treat animals with lower urinary tract tumors. As you know, these tumors often decrease quality of life and can be life-threatening.

As you'll see in the article below about new research on this advancement, there are significant advantages to this new treatment. Not only does it offer better outcomes than other treatments for these tumors, but it also lowers the post-operative suffering for the patient.

The Veterinary Specialty Center is proud to offer this new service—ultrasound guided endoscopic diode laser ablation of lower urinary tract tumors—to our patients and also to yours. Please take a look at the article below and call us if you have any questions or to discuss a patient that could benefit from this procedure.

Thank you for your constant support of our innovative new procedures.

Yours truly,

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New ultrasound-guided laser treatment provides relief for lower urinary tract tumors

Transitional cell carcinoma is a common malignancy found in the lower urinary tract of dogs. One of the most obvious signs of this disorder is called *stranguria*, which refers to a difficulty and discomfort in urinating for dogs. Very little urine will pass, and with it there may be blood. This can develop into a complete obstruction, called obstructive uropathy.

Although these tumors have a high tendency to metastasize, pet owners often will elect to euthanize their dogs to relieve their pet's suffering.

Median survival times for dogs diagnosed with transitional cell carcinoma are approximately four to six months with the treatment of a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug, Piroxicam, and nine to 12 months with multiple-agent chemotherapy. Surgical excision can provide temporary relief for many patients depending on a number of factors, including the exact location of the tumor.

Fortunately, recent studies indicate that a new treatment, ultrasound guided endoscopic laser ablation (UGELAB), can be useful in providing palliative relief to dogs with lower urinary tract tumors. There are a number of advantages to this new treatment. UGELAB of tumors located in the distal urinary tract provides significant and rapid relief from tumor obstruction with minimal to no side effects to the patient and additional time for chemotherapeutic agents to be effective.

What's more, some patients return home the same day without any apparent discomfort. Urinary

function often returns to normal the same day as surgery. As the procedure is relatively noninvasive, it can be repeated as often as needed.

UGELAB involves the collaboration of our oncology, imaging, surgery and internal medicine departments. Patients are staged prior to the procedure with full clinical-pathological assessment, radiographs, and ultrasound. Most patients do not present evidence of metastatic disease or significant metabolic compromise prior to the procedure.

The procedure is performed using a cystoscope to direct a diode laser fiber at the tumor. To ensure that the wall of the urethra or bladder is not perforated, the surgery is also guided by ultrasound. If ureteral obstruction is still a concern after tumor removal, stents can be used.

Potential complications during UGELAB are limited to perforation of the urinary tract during the procedure and perforation due to necrosis in the postoperative period. Some dogs may have trouble urinating for up to several weeks after the procedure.

Results of a study of UGELAB are encouraging. Researchers tested the UGELAB on 20 female dogs. Six of those animals were still alive at the time of the report, 470 days later. Of the others, they lived an average of 314 days for patients with urethral tumors and 289 days for patients with trigonal and urethral masses.

For more information about UGELAB, please contact Dr. Rhonda Feinmehl at Veterinary Specialty Center, 847-459-7535.