Post partum genital complications in the bitch

G N Purohit

Department of Veterinary Gynaecology and Obstetrics
College of Veterinary and Animal science
Rajasthan University of Veterinary and Animal Science
Bikaner Rajasthan 334001
Canine post-partum problems are comparatively less frequent and different from other domestic animals. The parturition is prolonged in the bitch (second stage of labor sometimes requiring up to 24 hours) hence the first thing a clinician must look for is the presence of any fetus.

In canines, normal postpartum discharge is dark green or greenish black in colour for the first 1 to 2 days which then becomes bloody and persists for 1 or 2 weeks or even up to 1 month. There is usually a lot of discharge for the first 5 to 7 days. It should gradually decrease in volume and become thick and clear or grey by day 10.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIPS</td>
<td>3.65% 19.8%</td>
<td>Nagar et al., 2008, Al-Bassam et al., 1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post partum metritis</td>
<td>11.58% 3.3% 4.3%</td>
<td>Nagar et al., 2008, Ajala and Fayemi, 2011, Sathiamoorthy and Raja, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eclampsia</td>
<td>2.6% 18.24% 13.0%</td>
<td>Biddle and Mcintire, 2000, Dorbatz and Casey, 2000, Sabiri et al., 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post partum hemorrhage</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>Dickie and Arbeiter, 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uterine prolapse</td>
<td>1.25%</td>
<td>Biddle and Mcintire, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained placenta</td>
<td>0.85%</td>
<td>Burke, 1977</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Incidence of reported post-partum reproductive disorders in the bitch
## Table 2 Incidence of post partum canine reproductive disorders at CVAS Bikaner 2008-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clinical condition</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
<th>Breed of bitches</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retained fetal membranes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>German Shepherd</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub involution of placental sites</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>German Shepherd 2; Pomeranian 1; Labrador 1</td>
<td>23.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metritis</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Non-descript 4; Pomeranian 2</td>
<td>35.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uterine prolapse</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Non-Descript 1</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eclampsia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pomeranian 4; Doberman 1</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Post partum haemorrhage

Etiology
Uterine or vaginal injury following dystocia handling
Blood coagulation disorders

Diagnosis
Long speculum or paediatric endoscope needed for exam

Therapy
Suture
Wool soaked with adrenaline must be placed in the vagina
Dose of oxytocin
If severe uterine haemorrhage is suspected an emergency laparotomy with blood transfusion is suggested.
Retained foetal membrane

Placentae are usually passed within 15 min of a birth of a puppy. Many a time’s placental retention is suspected when in fact it has been eaten by the mother.

The condition is common in toy dog breeds

The persistence of greenish-black discharge for longer than 24-26 hours suggests retention
Clinical Signs:

Persistence of greenish discharge

Uterine distension and or placental parts in vagina.

Palpation is not reliable to diagnose a retained placenta.

Ultrasound may be used, but it too is very subjective in determining if a placenta is retained.

Exploratory celiotomy may be used to definitively diagnose retained placenta.

Diagnosis:

X-Ray/ USG not reliable/hysterotomy
Therapy:

Oxytocin 0.5U/Kg IM or IV Calcium gluconate (10%) 3-10 ml IV slowly. Followed by oxytocin, 5-25 IU, IM.

Oxytocin (5-25 IU IM) may be given routinely to all bitches once delivery has been completed. This has been suggested to aid in the expulsion of remaining placentas, and even retained fetuses (Fontbonne, 2010).

If metritis develops treat accordingly or Ovariohysterectomy (OHT) is suggested.
Sub involution of placental sites (SIPS) is a disorder that occurs in healthy bitches post-whelping. Young bitches (less than 3 years of age) are most commonly affected following the first whelping, the exact etiology continues to be obscure.

Normal placental separation: Degenerative changes in the spongy layer of endometrium. Degeneration of trophoblast cells (fetal cells)

In SIPS uterus continues to supply blood to tissue tags. The trophoblast cells do not degenerate and invade deeper in glandular layer.

Possible mechanisms  Lack of thrombosis in endometrial vessels. Failure of exposed placental blood vessels to occlude and damage of uterine vessels which leads to continued hemorrhage. Maternal Decidual cells prevent trophoblastic invasion by secretion of tGF-B but in their deficiency this is prevented.

High progesterone post whelping.  Exact etiology continues to be obscure

Predisposing factors  obesity, high calcium and low zinc in the diet, sub-clinical hypoglycaemia, uterine inertia and premature birth
Clinical signs

Sero-sanguineous or bloody discharge 8-16 weeks post partum

Progressive weakness and mild fever in a few cases

Anemia

Death is rare and occurs in uterine perforation.
Diagnosis:

Vaginoscopy reveals blood clots or pure blood or sanguineous discharge.

Vaginal cytology reveals RBCs and trophoblastic (decidua like) cells.

On gross examination, affected sites are larger than involuted sites and contain nodular protrusions of endometrium. Histologically, these nodules are made up of eosinophilic tissue with necrosis and hemorrhage.

Diagram of subinvolution with invasion of myometrium, necrosis, retention of collagen.
Normal placenta sites in a postpartum bitch

Sub involution of a placental site.
Schematic drawing of sub-involution of placental sites in dogs (Al-Bassam et al., 1981) 45-65 days of whelping
Sonographic features have been described but require good instrumentation and sufficient expertise.

Postpartum 1 week. Abdominal sonogram of a bitch 1 week postpartum. The uterine horn is shown in longitudinal plane, with a placental site in the left half of the image (England et al., 2003).

Postpartum 3 weeks, normal uterine involution. Abdominal sonogram of a pregnant bitch at 3 weeks after parturition. The uterine horn is shown in longitudinal plane, with a placental site (p) in the right half of the image (England et al., 2003).

Postpartum 5 weeks, normal involution. Abdominal sonogram of a pregnant bitch 5 weeks after parturition (England et al., 2003).

The placental site (PS) is indicated between + symbols and the arrows mark the normal uterine tissue (Sontas et al., 2011).
It is important to perform a differential diagnosis with

Coagulopathies

metritis

brucellosis

caudal reproductive tract inflammation

trauma

and neoplasia.

Laparotomy is one means of diagnosis
Therapy:

Ergonovine maleate 0.2 mg/Kg

Medroxyprogesterone acetate 2 mg/Kg

PG
Progestagen (Niagestin 25-50 mg per bitch)

For bitches presented in good health without significant anemia, benign neglect can be suggested

Laparotomy and curettage

Ovariohysterectomy
Post partum Metritis

Acute infection of uterine endometrium during the immediate postpartum period (usually within 1 week) or after an abortion, often associated with a retained placenta or a retained dead pup.

The most common organism is E Coli although Streptococcus and Staphylococcus are also seen.
Clinical signs

Foul smelling vaginal discharge

Lack of interest in pups

Dull and depressed

Pups may cry and have red edematous ani

Vomiting, diarrhea, congestion of mucus membranes

Fever 103-105°C

Anorexia and Tenesmus
Diagnosis:

Culture of vaginal discharge

Hematology increased leukocyte count and shift to left

Ultrasonography
Hysteroscopy
Done under sedation
A urethral catheter (Ureteral CRU®, 5Fr, Rusch, France) inserted inside the operating channel is used for cervical catheterization and remained close to the cervical opening. Then filtered air is insufflated (GastroPack®, Storz, Germany) through the catheter to allow distension of the cervix in order to allow the passage of the scope inside the uterus. **Tran cervical cannulation** via endoscopy has been recorded for collection of uterine samples for microbiology and or evaluation of retained placenta or detecting uterine subinvolution.
Therapy:

IV fluid and electrolytes

Broad spectrum antibiotics safe for nursing pups for ex: Ampicillin 20 mg/Kg; Trimethoprim or oxacillin. Amoxicillin (15 mg/kg body wt/48 h) and/or gentamicin (4 mg/kg body wt/day) administered as intramuscular (i.m.) injections

PG 0.10-0.20 mg/Kg every 12-24 h for 3-5 days.
Ergonovine 0.2 mg/Kg

Ovariohysterectomy

Nowadays the most used treatment are the progesterone antagonists, Alizine\textsuperscript{®}. Dose used is 0.33 ml /Kg, two injections 24 hours apart and repeated every week until the uterine content has disappeared.
Eclampsia

A life threatening disease occurring 2-4 weeks post partum because of low calcium levels.

Affects small to medium sized bitches at peak lactation.

Serum calcium concentrations fall to about 4 to 7 mg/dl (normal 9 to 11 mg/dl)

Bitches with a heavy litter are most affected

Excessive prenatal supplementation of calcium

Alkalosis can exacerbate eclampsia
Clinical signs

Restlessness followed by nervousness and panting

Loss of maternal behavior

High body temperature 107°C

Increased salivation

Stiff gait rapidly progressing to muscle tremors, tetany and seizures
Diagnosis:
History, clinical signs and serum profile of calcium

Therapy

10% calcium gluconate 1-20 mL IV

Vitamin D 10,000-25,000 Units daily

Dextrose (Because hypoglycemia is often concurrent)

Diazepam 1- 5 mg IV in case of seizures

S/C calcium diluted with 50% saline should be administered after IV infusion

Oral calcium gluconate or carbonate 10-30 mg/Kg every 8 h
Precautions

Monitor heart beat for arrhythmia and bradycardia during calcium infusion. Infuse more slowly or discontinue temporarily if this happens. Response in 15 minutes of therapy.

Stop feeding pups till recovery.

Avoid Corticosteroids as they promote calciuria and decrease intestinal calcium absorption.

Also avoid diets high in legumes like soya bean or cottage cheese as they tie up dietary calcium.
Uterine prolapse

**Cause:** Obstetric manipulation
Intense tenesmus

**Diagnosis:** Tubular inverted mass is visible

Abdominal pain

Restlessness

**Therapy**

Replacement under sedation or general anesthesia

Laparotomy

Ovariohysterectomy
Uterine rupture
This is an emergency

Cause:
Large litters leading to thinning of uterine wall
Multiparous dams
Dystocia
External trauma
Uterine torsion

Clinical signs:
Depend upon extent and time since rupture and presence of infection

Diagnosis: Cytological evaluation of peritoneal fluid

Therapy: Emergency laparotomy
Unilateral hysterectomy
Vaginitis

Vaginal discharge
Licking of vulva
Urinary incontinence
Frequent urination
Attraction of male dogs
Occasionally, dogs have clinical signs associated with a concurrent disease (e.g. diabetes mellitus or hepatic disease) that exacerbates the vaginitis
Erythema in the vaginal vault

Diagnosis: Vaginoscopy
Cytological examination of vaginal epithelial cells and vaginal discharge, vaginal and urine bacterial cultures and antimicrobial sensitivity testing, urinalysis, a digital vaginal examination, and vaginoscopy

Therapy: Local antibiotics
Phenylpropanolamine may also help control subclinical urinary incontinence.
Thank You

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