

Illness and Behaviour



Aggression



Aggression Statistics

- **Owner influences** (Casey, 2014);
 - Attending puppy classes or ring-craft reduces aggression incidences
 - Training techniques that involve punishment or negative reinforcement increase risk of aggression
 - Owners >40 2x less likely to have aggression issues than those <25
 - Female owners less likely to have aggressive dogs

Therefore – female owners, over 40, who treat their dogs nicely and take them to puppy classes will have less aggressive dogs.



Why is aggression important?

- Most common behavioural problem reported to behavioural clinics
- Most common behavioural cause of dogs relinquished to animal shelters
- Most common behavioural cause of euthanasia
- Danger to other dogs and people
- Damage to owner-dog relationship

Medical causes of Aggression in Cats

- Hyperthyroidism
- Pain
 - Arthritis
 - Dental Pain
 - IBD, Cystitis
 - Hyperaesthesia syndrome – epilepsy?
 - Orofacial pain syndrome – Burmese cats
- Neurological conditions
 - Epilepsy, Toxoplasma, Neoplasia, Rabies



Medical Causes of Aggression in Dogs

- 28% of all cases of aggression caused by underlying medical conditions (Barcelos 2015)
- Pain more than 50% of these cases
 - Musculoskeletal pain main cause of pain (75%) with hip and elbow arthritis most common
 - Pain may lower dog's general threshold behaviour for aggression while encouraging aggressive displays as part of defensive/protective behaviour.

Pain and Aggression

- Dogs in pain more likely to have a negative temperament i.e. more withdrawn and reluctant to move.
- When dog is lying down or approached by another dog
- Bites associated with pain – directed at extremities and less severe
- Where pain identified as cause of aggression carries an excellent prognosis

Other medical causes of aggression

- Hypothyroidism – 2%,
- Neurological disease
 - Epilepsy
 - Neoplasia
 - Senility – canine cognitive dysfunction
 - Other diseases, hepatic encephalopathy etc

Depression

- Pain – arthritis, dental pain, trauma
- Hormonal conditions
 - Hypothyroidism, Diabetes, Cushings
- GI disease/nausea
- Infection - fever
- Neoplasia



Toileting Problems

- Loss of house training – cats vs dogs
 - GI disease, cystitis
 - Senility
 - Increased output
- Increased urination
 - Hormonal, diabetes
 - Cushings, hyperthyroid

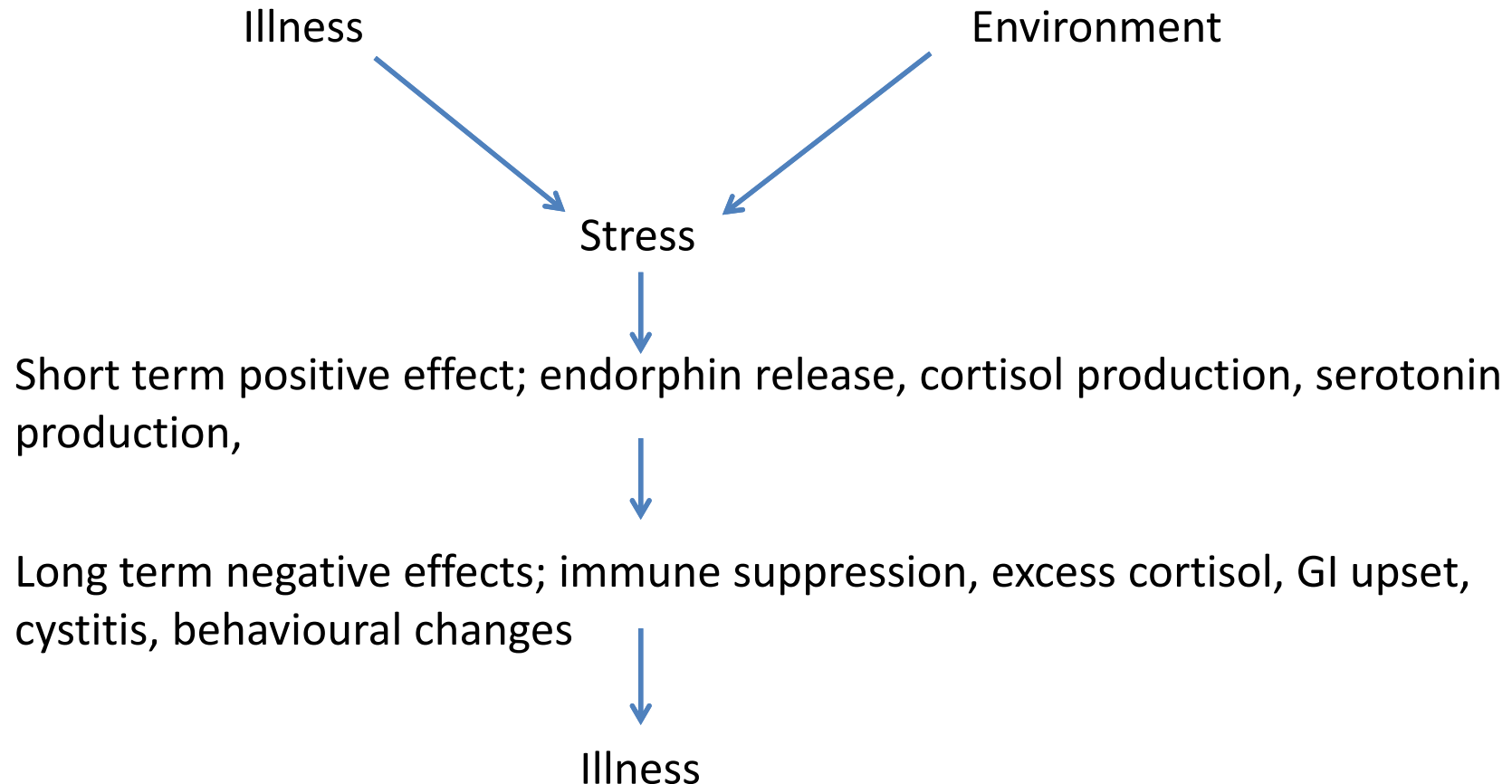


Toileting Problems

- Cats – spraying vs urinating
- Spraying
 - 10% neutered males, 5% neutered females
 - Incidence increases with number of cats in household (100% if >10 cats)
 - Usually behavioural/hormonal
 - Stress/cystitis
- Urinating outside of litter
 - FLUTD, stress



Stress and Illness?



Stress/Illness/Behaviour

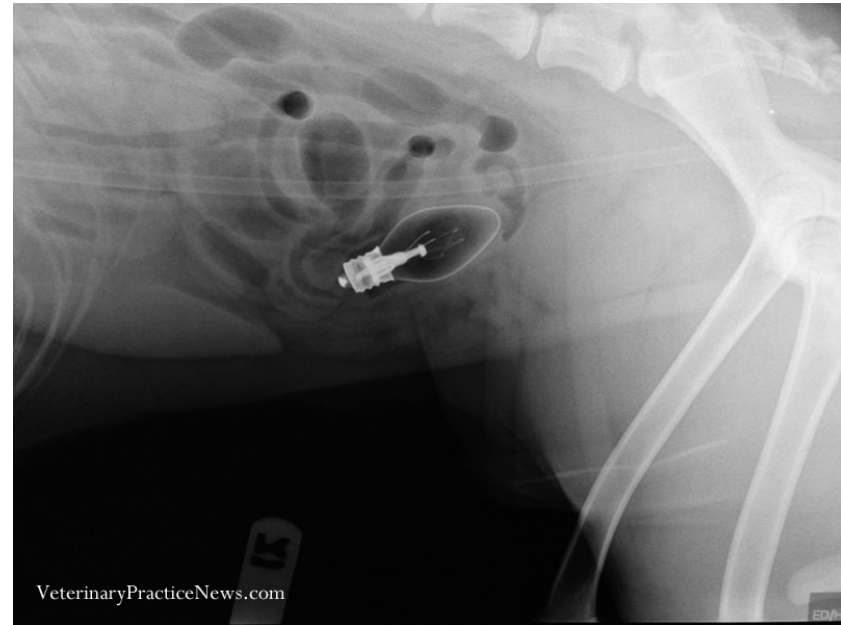
Behavioural Problem



Pica

- Eating non food items
 - Grass
 - Stones
 - Soil
 - Faeces

- Nutrition? Anaemia? Parasites?



Confusion

- Senility – Cognitive Dysfunction Syndrome
- Hepatic Encephalopathy
- Other neuro disorders
 - Infectious/inflammatory, post-ictal, neoplasia



Cognitive Dysfunction Syndrome

Canine and Feline dementia/senility

Becoming quieter/more withdrawn

Confusion/disorientation

Toileting indoors

Barking/meowing at strange objects, middle of night

Sundowner Syndrome

Not just 'getting old'

Gentle exercise

Stick to routines

Keep comfortable, treat other medical problems

Diet, fatty acids/anti-oxidants

Supplements – Tryptophan

Medications, anti-anxiety



Humanizing dog and cat emotions

- Jealousy? Guilt? Depression?
- Dogs have emotional and mental intelligence of 2&1/2 year old child.
- Develop emotional range by 4-6months of age
- Shame, pride, guilt, contempt develop in humans at 3-4 years of age.

Guilt?

- Is it really Guilt?
- Fear, association with owner distress/anger
- Studies – owner's perception
- Why does it matter?
 - Training implications



Belligerance/Stubbornness

- Trainability of different breeds
 - Top breeds – Border Collie, Poodle, GSH, Retrievers
 - Bottom breeds – Bulldog, Afghan, Beagle,
- Instinctive/adaptive/working intelligence
- Don't understand? Boredom? Fear?
- Avoid getting angry – likely to worsen situation.

Jealousy?



Jealousy

- Jealousy vs Possessiveness?
- Jealousy - desire to have what what you don't already have
- Possessiveness – reluctance to share what you already own
- Possessive – food, comfort, attention – lead to conflict
- Why some pets more possessive? Some situations more problematic?

Take home messages

- Underlying health issues will trigger different adverse behaviours
- Illness may not be obvious. Change in behaviour
- Treatment of those conditions can improve QOL of pet and owner
- Better understanding of animal emotions enables us to be better pet owners and more tolerant of our pets behaviour.