

AN ACUTE VIGNETTE

Hepar Sulphuris Calcareum

By Anne C. Hermans, DVM

Cookie, a nine-year-old female spayed mixed-breed dog with no prior health problems, presented in August 1999 in a verbal consult for severe acute mouth pain.

The owner had detected a left upper retained deciduous incisor that was darkly discolored at the base and accompanied by redness and swelling on the gum immediately around the tooth. No other abnormalities were revealed to the extent of examination possible. Normally stoic and acquiescent, Cookie was so painful that she would not permit her gums to be even lightly touched or her mouth opened. The owner reported that she was not eating, barely drinking, and had slept poorly for the past two days. She acted miserable, but not seeking or avoiding company especially. There was no obvious evidence of latent psora on subsequent examination by myself, and no retained deciduous incisor on the right side.

An analysis was done using the following rubrics: MIND, sensitive, oversensitive, pain, to; MOUTH, inflammation, gums; TEETH, abscess of roots; and GENERALITIES, touch, agg., slight. The analysis confirmed the most compelling acute remedy choice in this case, hepar sulphuris calcareum, based on the keynote symptoms of extreme, seemingly disproportionate sensitivity to pain, and the involvement with a tooth, a location for which hepar sulphuris has an affinity.

Although a tooth root abscess was not confirmed radiographically, this rubric was included because the tooth was not resorbing normally and looked and felt like an abscessed tooth. Accordingly, the owner was instructed to give one dose of hepar 30C dry on the tongue. Given the intensity of symptoms, she was instructed to repeat the dose once within the first 12 hours if symptoms were unchanged or had improved but began to gather force again. A single dose of 200C would also have been appropriate in this case but the owner had 30C at home.

The remedy was administered in the evening, and Cookie slept well that night. When she awoke, she was acting like herself again, eating and drinking normally, and the redness around the tooth was gone. The owner did not repeat the remedy. Two weeks later the tooth fell out, uneventfully.

Although unaccompanied by any observable aggravation or discharge, the rapid, sustained improvement, followed by normal loss of the tooth, indicates a curative response. An observable aggravation would not be expected in an acute case such as this, especially at a lower potency. Also, when a potency matches the case well, and organic disease is not present, an aggravation is sometimes not seen.

Cookie receives top-notch care, has a wonderful lifestyle, and is an unusually healthy dog. It seemed a stretch at the time to assign her chronic disease based on one retained deciduous tooth, although normally these teeth are lost in puppyhood. Certainly, the acute presentation called for an acute remedy and treatment approach. Hepar, an important and deep-reaching antipsoric remedy, has tremendous application as an acute remedy too.

As full recovery was rapid and uneventful after one low dose of the appropriate

remedy, and no additional problems remained or arose, it may be inferred that this was indeed a presentation of acute, and not chronic, disease. Cookie has enjoyed excellent health to this day.

REFERENCES

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