George MacLeod
Dogs: Homeopathic Remedies

Reading excerpt

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Diseases of the Muscles

1. MYOSITIS

Inflammation of muscle fibres is a well-documented syndrome in the dog, leading to degeneration of muscles in prolonged cases.

ETIOLOGY. The cause may be either systemic or traumatic. The loose description of 'rheumatism' being a cause is not really applicable to the dog. If the origin is systemic there is usually a bacterial infection present, while trauma is associated with injury of one kind or another.

CLINICAL SIGNS. There may be swelling of the particular muscle but frequently no special signs are evident and the owner's attention is drawn to the fact that the animal cries out on being moved or lifted. Various postures are assumed according to the muscles affected, e.g. arching of the back when the lumbar muscles are involved. A board-like feeling on the abdomen indicates pain of the muscles of that region.

TREATMENT

1. ACONITVM 6c. Should always be considered in the early stages and will bring about relief from pain, especially if the origin is bacterial. It will allay any tendency to shock if the condition arises very quickly.

2. RHUS TOX. 6c. This remedy is indicated when the animal gains relief from movement, even although the initial movement is painful. It may influence the muscles of the left side of the body more than the right, and could be indicated when severe wetting or prolonged damp is associated with the onset of symptoms.

3. BRYONIA 30c. Movement is resented when Bryonia is indicated. The animal will seek to lie on the affected muscles and pressure on them gives ease. Warmth is usually useful also.

4. CURARE 30c. Indicated when there is a generalised weakness or semi-paralysis of the muscles involved. Muscular reflexes are abolished.
DISEASES OF THE MUSCLES

5. CAUSTICUM 30c. This remedy is associated with an accompanying contraction of tendons and stiffness of muscles. Warmth gives relief. More adaptable to the older patient with unsteadiness of gait.

6. ZINC. MET. 30c. Associated with trembling of affected muscles which also show weakness. Usually arises from cases of systemic (bacterial) origin and may be indicated for a more general involvement of the neuro-muscular system.

7. STRYCHNINUM 30c. This remedy could be indicated when severe contractions of muscles take place as part of an overall systemic involvement. Various postures may be assumed. 8. GELSEMIUM 30c. Weakness and a tendency to paralysis is the keynote of this remedy. There may be a generalised involvement of all muscles and the trouble is usually systemic in origin. An attempt to exercise the animal can lead to collapse with severe fatigue.

2. MYOSITIS OF THE MASTICATORY MUSCLES

A specific form of myositis affects the German Shepherd breed or animals bred from them and occurs in both dogs and bitches. It is associated with an increase in certain white cells circulating in the blood and being deposited in the affected muscles. There is no known cause which can be regarded as exact.

CLINICAL SIGNS. The muscles of the cheek become puffed out, giving the face a pointed look and exerting pressure on the area around the eyes causing them to appear protruded. Pain is present in the early acute stage and the animal has difficulty in opening the mouth. Extension of the disease process to the throat results in tonsillitis and lymphadenitis. The inability to open the mouth results in progressive debility and weakness. Changes in the muscle fibres result eventually in fibrosis giving the muscles a hard sensation which accompanies the degeneration.

TREATMENT. This can be a difficult condition to treat but the following remedies are worth considering:

1. CURARE 30c. This remedy may help the function of the muscles and limit the tendency to paralysis.
2. **THUJA 6c.** This is a constitutional remedy which has given encouraging results in muscle conditions where hardening of fibres occurs and is reputed to have helped degenerative muscle conditions in other species.

3. **SILICEA 30c.** This remedy has a reputation for helping to limit the overproduction of white cells in certain pathological states and is therefore indicated indirectly in an attempt to limit the process.

4. **MERC. IOD. RUB. 30c.** This remedy has a specific action on the left side of the pharynx and may help inflammatory or other processes affecting this area including any neighbouring lymphadenitis.

5. **MERC. IOD. FLAV. 30c.** The same indications exist for this remedy but the right side of the pharyngeal area is involved.

6. **PHYTOLACCA 30c.** This is also a good general throat remedy and may help relieve any complications affecting this area.

### 3. MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY

This term covers a condition of degeneration of muscle with attendant atrophy and ultimately replacement of muscle strands with fibrous tissue. This eventually leads to an apparent increase in the muscle mass. The muscles chiefly involved are those of the hind-leg above the hock and those of the shoulder.

**ETIOLOGY.** Although a somewhat similar condition occurs in lambs and calves due to a shortage of Vitamin E in the metabolism of the growing muscle, this sequence of events has not been demonstrated in the dog in the natural state, although experimentation has produced it artificially. It may be due to an unknown hereditary factor affecting the metabolism of the muscles.

**CLINICAL SIGNS.** Progressive muscular weakness leads eventually to an inability to stand, preceded by varying degrees of paresis; a shuffling or stumbling gait ensues. Disease of the gastrocnemius muscle above the hock produces a 'dropped leg' appearance. Obesity is a frequent sign of systemic involvement.
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