Selected Abstracts From the Literature


Objective: To investigate the reasons for evaluation on an emergency basis of and short-term outcomes for chickens from backyard flocks.

Design: Retrospective case series.

Animals: 78 chickens.

Procedures: For chickens evaluated on an emergency basis at a New England veterinary teaching hospital in January 2014 through March 2017, information, including age, sex, flock size, primary medical problem, final diagnosis, and immediate outcome, was obtained from electronic medical records. Primary medical problems were classified as abnormal droppings, crop or gastrointestinal tract disease, lameness, neurologic disease, nonspecific signs (ie, undefined illness), respiratory tract disease, reproductive tract disease, and trauma.

Results: 78 chickens were evaluated on an emergency basis, of which 71 were females from small flocks. Median age of the chickens was 1 year (range, 0.1–7 years). The most common problem was trauma (n = 25), followed by nonspecific signs (11), and reproductive tract disease (10); 18 birds had neurologic disease (6), lameness (6), or gastrointestinal tract disease (6). Five birds had respiratory tract disease, and 3 had abnormal droppings. Six birds were brought to the emergency service for euthanasia only. Trauma, reproductive tract disease, and signs of Marek disease were identified most frequently in birds that were fully evaluated. Thirty-five (45%) chickens were discharged from the hospital.

Conclusions and clinical relevance: Results indicated that backyard flock chickens were evaluated on an emergency basis most commonly because of trauma and reproductive tract disease. Although approximately half of the evaluated chickens were euthanized, the remainder were discharged from the hospital and required medical management.


Case description: A 1-year-old male eclectus parrot (Eclectus roratus) with a 3- to 4-month history of blepharospasm in the right eye was referred to a veterinary medical teaching hospital for further evaluation. Conventional medical treatments had been ineffective. The referring avian specialist had plucked a suspected ectopic feather from the right eye 6 weeks before the referral evaluation.

Clinical findings: The parrot was sedated, and ophthalmic examination of the right eye with slit-lamp biomicroscopy revealed a 3 × 2 × 2-mm raised vascular mass with a focally pigmented center associated with the temporal aspect of the leading edge of the third eyelid. No abnormalities were detected in the left eye.

Treatment and outcome: The parrot was anesthetized, and the right eye mass was excised and submitted for histologic examination. Histologically, there was a single pigmented feather follicle bulb surrounded by multiple discrete lymphoid follicles and moderate lymphoplasmacytic inflammation within the substantia propria of the third eyelid conjunctiva. The histologically normal feather follicle in an abnormal location classified the lesion as a choristoma. Nine months postoperatively, the parrot had no signs of ocular discomfort and no overt regrowth of the feather follicle.

Clinical relevance: For the eclectus parrot of this report, a lesion caused by normal differentiation of an ectopic feather follicle in the right third eyelid was treated successfully. A third eyelid choristoma appears to be a hitherto unreported pathologic finding in avian species. Although rare, the presence of a choristoma should be considered as a differential diagnosis for birds with blepharospasm.