

HERBAL CROSSROADS

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Treatment of Pain and Paralysis in Small Animals Using Kan Veterinary Essentials

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The association of Kidney deficiency with hind limb and low back weakness and pain means it is often the first Chinese medical diagnosis suspected in small animals with mobility issues. Affected animals are often elderly, have graying around the muzzle, and have experienced vision or hearing loss. They may also have polyuria, increased thirst, urinary incontinence, and lumbar stiffness. Limb complaints are usually aggravated by exercise and improved with rest. Their energy may be very low in the morning, causing them to sleep in late. Serum chemistry panels may show renal azotemia, hypothyroidism, or chronic non-regenerative anemia. Improvements are often seen, at least temporarily, with acupuncture treatment of Bladder 23 through Bladder 26.

Rehmannia Eight Combination is commonly used as a reliable general Kidney Qi and Yang tonic, while APR Nourishing Formula addresses those patients with Empty Fire secondary to Yin deficiency, manifesting occasionally as diabetic neuropathy. A Kidney Qi and Yang tonic that specifically targets low back and hind limb pain and weakness is Eucommia and Rehmannia Combination. Its content of Eucommia allows it to gradually but definitely ease low back pain and weakness, while Psoralea and Cuscuta help urinary incontinence.

Supple Spine should be considered for animals that seem Kidney deficient, but don't respond well to Kidney tonification formulas. Wind Cold Damp can invade the Tai Yang surfaces of patients weakened by Kidney deficiency, coming to rest in the sinews of the Kidney in the low back. Pain and weakness will often worsen in cold or damp weather, and only resolve once the pathogen has been expelled – a role filled in Supple Spine by Loranthus, Large Leaf Gentian Root, Ledebouriella, Angelica, and Curculigo. The other herbs in Supple Spine tonify Qi, Kidney Yin and Yang, and Blood – all of which are frequently compromised in affected patients. In particular, however, patients that benefit from Supple Spine will have benefited from Blood tonics in the past.

Case Study #1

Willy, a ten year old male neutered Dachshund presented with a chief complaint of hind leg weakness secondary to intervertebral disk disease. Willy responded poorly to cage rest and corticosteroids. Chiropractic and acupuncture relieved the pain, but not the tendency for Willy's hind limbs to collapse regularly. Other symptoms included increased appetite, low thirst, urinary incontinence, polyuria, a

May
2007

tendency to low body weight, chilliness, and lameness during cold weather. Physical examination revealed a pale tongue, a thin and wiry pulse, powdery dander, and lumbosacral rigidity. Loss of weight despite a normal appetite signals Yin deficiency, in the absence of any soft stools. Polyuria and incontinence signal a weakening of the mutual controlling relationship between the Kidneys and the Heart, resulting in increased thirst, a reduced ability of the Bladder to separate the clear from the turbid, and reduced control of the lower orifices. The pale tongue likely signals Blood deficiency with secondary Liver Qi stagnation, given the thin wiry pulse. Dry powdery dander can be associated with either Kidney Yin or Blood deficiency, but the appearance of pain during cold weather suggests a Cold pathogen invasion. Willy was prescribed Supple Spine and within three weeks, he had gained weight, was no longer weak, had a more supple spine, had no dander, and no longer had polyuria or urinary incontinence.

Use of Liver Blood tonics like Liver Support Formula can aid mobility problems directly, instead of being simply part of the history. Spasm is the main cause of pain in these patients, arising from insufficient Blood to keep the musculature adequately perfused. Examples include spasm of the triceps in Rottweilers; Wobbler's syndrome in Dobermans; intervertebral disk disease in Dachshunds; and acute neck pain in many breeds. Typical signs of Blood deficiency are also present, including fine powdery dander, anxiety, a pale or lavender tongue, thin wiry pulses, and dry skin or eyes.

Case Study #2

Peanuts, a six year old female spayed miniature Dachshund presented with a chief complaint of acute shoulder and neck pain. No response was observed to initial treatment with Rimadyl, prednisone, cage rest and dexamethasone injections. The pain was severe, producing loss of appetite and an inability to walk without crying or lifting the head. Radiographs demonstrated calcified disks at T8-9 and C1-2. During physical examination, Peanuts had a severely hunched back, especially in lumbar region, and muscle fasciculations in the neck.

Palpation of fixations at the atlanto-occipital, lumbo-sacral, and thoraco-lumbar junctions elicited pain. Fine powdery dander was observed. Initial treatment with chiropractic and acupuncture allowed Peanuts to walk short distances without obvious pain. Given the spasms and dander, Blood deficiency was diagnosed and Liver Support Formula prescribed. After two more weeks, normal ambulation, normal head and neck motion was achieved, and the fasciculations resolved. During the following six years, as of last follow up, the condition never returned.

When pathogens penetrate deeper, from the Wei (Tai Yang) level to the Qi (Yang Ming) layer, Wind Cold turns to Wind Heat, and symptoms intensify. The pain level frequently becomes severe, and is aggravated by manipulative therapies like chiropractic. Fever, restlessness, and heat intolerance are also common. Such symptom pictures are common in animals suffering from nerve root impingement, spinal tumors, meningitis, and disk slippage. An abrupt onset of symptoms signals the likelihood of a Wind invasion. Bupleurum and Kudzu Clearing Formula can offer dramatic relief in these patients, but often only after several days of use.

Case Study #3

Sasha, a spayed female greyhound wolfhound cross of indeterminate age became abruptly lame in the right forelimb after rolling in the snow on a winter morning walk. The pain was intense, resulting in a complete inability to bear weight. Chiropractic treatment later that day resulted in



Sasha yelping and attempting to bite. Radiographs identified no abnormalities to account for the lameness, but a spinal tumor or nerve root entrapment from a soft tissue lesion could not be ruled out. Corticosteroids administered over the next two days resulted in no improvement. During this episode, Sasha uncharacteristically desired to stay outside and lie in the snow. Thirst was dramatically increased, even before corticosteroids were administered. Because of the obvious Heat signs, sudden onset of symptoms, and intense pain aggravated by chiropractic, Bupleurum and Kudzu Clearing Formula was administered three times daily at the high end of the normal dose range. Significant improvements in the ability to use the limb were observed over the next two days. Over the next ten days, the lameness completely resolved, and did not recur.



Another formula useful for pain and paralysis in Hot patients is Four Marvels. From an Eight Parameters perspective, patients can be described as Hot and Excessive, with a long history of inflammatory disorders like dermatitis, anal sacculitis, colitis, cystitis, otitis, and pancreatitis. Pain is often substantial, worse in the hind limbs, and commonly progresses to complete immobility. Thirst or appetite may be increased and the patient restless. The cause of the Heat is usually Stasis produced by Damp accumulations secondary to Spleen deficiency. Signs of Spleen deficiency are subtle and few, but may include a surprising preference for

warmth, vomiting, soft stools, or a low appetite. The tongue usually varies from red to dark or purple-red, and the pulse varies between slippery and wiry.

Case Study #4

Jed, an 8-year-old male intact German Shepherd farm dog presented with a chief complaint of suspected degenerative myelopathy. He had exhibited progressive ataxia and hind-end weakness for the past four months, before becoming unable to rise. Jed appeared with pain in the hind end and resented being lifted. His hind leg musculature was atrophied and his hind limb toenails were worn from foot dragging. Jed's past medical history included multiple inflammatory problems, such as anal sacculitis, colitis, and allergic dermatitis of the caudal ventrum. Radiographs showed spondylosis deformans at L2-L4 and L7-S1. Pellets were visible in the right hip and rump where he had been previously shot, unbeknownst to his owners. He exhibited poor hip conformation with sclerosis visible at the left acetabulum. Palpation of the lumbar region proved painful, but identified immobility from L5-L7. Jed's left hind adductor muscles were in spasm, and he had a wiry pulse. The tongue color was not noted. Given the presence of pain, degenerative myelopathy was considered less likely than simply cumulative weakness and pain resulting from multiple orthopedic problems, including possible sciatic and femoral nerve root compression resulting from the spondylosis. The lower limb weakness, wiry pulse, and multiple inflammatory disorders of the Lower Burner suggested Four Marvels might be beneficial. Chiropractic and acupuncture to Stomach 41 and 36, Bladder 20, Spleen 9, Large Intestine 11, and Liver 13 were administered as well, resulting in an immediate improvement in ataxia and adductor spasm. Six weeks later, Jed was clinically normal, with a return of both muscle mass and the ability to jump and run.

Most chronic inflammation arises from Blood stasis due to longstanding obstruction by Dampness or Phlegm. Sublime Joint Formula picks up where Four Marvels leaves off, by

addressing Blood stasis more effectively, and transforming Damp Heat pathogens that have congealed into Phlegm. Dampness and Phlegm is signified by a tendency to cutaneous growths and nodules; weight gains; seborrhea oleosa; large flakes of grey or tan dander; mucoid discharges; or yeast infections. A Wind Damp invasion may be signified by the presence of cutaneous infection or a worsening of pain during wet weather. Blood stasis is indicated by easily localized pain that is worse with over-exertion, ameliorated by motion and NSAIDs, and induced by trauma.

Case Study #5

Frosty, an 11 ½ year old male neutered domestic short-haired feline presented with a chief complaint of being increasingly reclusive and constipated following the incomplete healing of a left hind stifle fracture. NSAIDs were beneficial in relieving the pain, but Frosty still ‘bunny-hopped’ as he descended the stairs. Previous problems included a deep hoarse cough treated with prednisone and a longstanding tendency to gain weight. Frosty also had reduced tear production, but no corneal lesions, and had suffered an episode of stranguria and dysuria that resolved without catheterization. Frosty sought out cool places to rest. During physical examination, large flakes of dander and feline acne were identified. Radiographs showed no evidence of a fracture of the left stifle, but pain was elicited when Frosty was palpated over the sacrum. His tongue was purple and swollen, and he had wiry pulses. The dominant elements of the case were Dampness, Heat, and Blood stasis. Blood stasis is signified by the prior history of trauma, the response to NSAIDs, the easily localized and persistent pain, the purple tongue and the wiry pulse. Dampness and Phlegm was suggested by the history of weight gains, the swollen tongue, the oily coat and dander, and the previous episode of cystitis. A drying effect of Heat (which congeals Damp into Phlegm) was suggested by the desire for cool places, the dry eyes, the constipation, and the prednisone-responsive cough. Frosty was prescribed Sublime Joint Formula, and within six weeks was no longer reclusive and constipated, was active, and had no obvious pain

over the sacrum. Frosty’s gait was increasingly normal as he descended the stairs.

Benefit Hips and Knees is probably the single most commonly indicated formula for hip dysplasia and intervertebral disk disease, addressing chronic stasis lesions within the Gall Bladder channel. Cruciate ligament tears also frequently benefit from the formula. The easiest way to diagnose Gall Bladder channel obstruction is via a palpable improvement in the typically deep wiry pulse following needle or acupressure stimulation of key points like Gall Bladder 34, 25, 25, 29, 30 and 40.

Case Study #6

Kimmie, a 3 ½ year old female spayed Dachshund presented with a chief complaint of hind end paralysis and urinary incontinence of several weeks duration. Initial treatment with chiropractic, acupuncture to the Bladder channel and Supple Spine had produced significant improvements, but Kimmie was still unable to go upstairs, and ataxic. A deep wiry pulse was palpated that relaxed following needling of Gall Bladder 26 (a trigger point below the ventral border of the ileum). Gall Bladder 20 and 34; Bladder 21, 25, 40, and 54; and Governing Vessel 20 were also needled. Benefit Hips and Knees was also prescribed. Within one month, the incontinence and ataxia had resolved. Kimmie was able to go upstairs and onto furniture without any assistance after two months of treatment.

Kan Essentials



supporting the health of your animal

Formula	Acute	Chronic	Wind	Blood Stasis	Damp or Phlegm	Tonic	Hot	Cold
Rehmannia Eight		3				3		3
APR Nourishing Formula		3				3	3	
Eucommia & Rehmannia		3				3		3
Supple Spine	3	3	3			3		3
Liver Support Formula	3	3				3		
Bupleurum & Kudzu Formula	3	3	3				3	
Four Marvels	3	3		3	3	3	3	
Sublime Joint Formula		3	3	3	3		3	
Benefit the Hips and Knees		3	3	3		3	3	3

Figure 1. Prescribe quickly but accurately by assessing the patient for the factors above, then choosing the formula(s) that address(es) them

selected formulas

Rehmannia Eight
 APR Nourishing
 Formula
 Four Marvels



Supple Spine
 Bupleurum and Kudzu
 Eucommia and
 Rehmannia