



Interesting Case from our web site www.fairfield-vets.co.uk



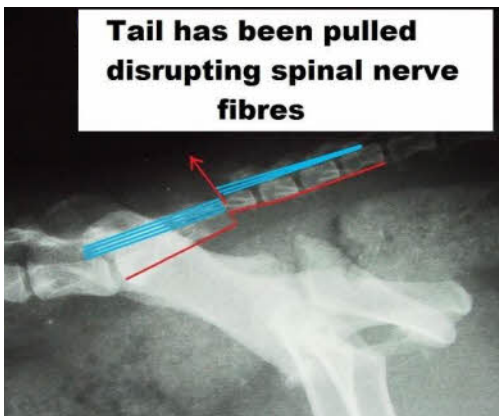
"Chukkie" - Longhair Cat with Sacro-coccygeal Luxation



Chukkie



X-ray



Close up of base of tail
showing disrupted spinal nerve fibres.

It was obvious when "Chukkie" was first presented at the Fairfield Veterinary Centre that he had experienced an episode of trauma but it was only a few days later that the full extent of his injuries became clear. Failure of his injured tail to improve, in combination with urinary incontinence generally points to a traction injury.

This is believed to occur when the patient traps their tail under the wheel of a car which consequently tears the body of the tail from the vertebral column (sacro-coccygeal luxation). The disruption of the spinal nerves usually results in a completely limp, paralysed tail which lacks any sensation.

If left untreated the tail can become necrotic and the dying tissue acts a host for infection. Early removal of the tail avoids these complications. However, the biggest problem remains. An incontinent cat is not pleasant for patient or owners. Cats, which are normally very fastidious when it comes to their toileting habits lose control of their bladder.

The most frustrating and difficult dilemma is trying to decide how long to wait before concluding that recovery is hopeless. Recovery of nerve damage is notoriously difficult to predict both in human and veterinary medicine. Nerve regeneration is both slow and often haphazard. It was thought that with the extent that "Chukkie's" spine was distracted, judging from the x-rays, that recovery was unlikely. However, his owners felt that as a young adult cat he was worth the benefit of the doubt.

Each day, with the assistance of my colleague Aga, his bladder was squeezed by hand to express his urine. A thankless task that requires both patience and perseverance with absolutely no guarantee of success.

Fortunately, for "Chukkie" his owners had it in abundance and their efforts paid off. Several weeks after the initial trauma "Chukkie" has regained use of his bladder and has now returned to his normal routine.

Terry Dunne BVMS, Cert SAO, MRCVS

This article is available on the Fairfield Veterinary Centre web site at www.fairfield-vets.co.uk

You won't care how much we know - until you know how much we care