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"Epey" - 19yo Cat with Osteomyelitis



"Epey" is a 19 year old, much loved cat who was presented to me several months ago with what originally seemed to be a very straightforward problem. She had a wound on her face which had a purulent discharge. Antibiotics were prescribed but after an initial improvement the problem was still there several weeks later.

"Epey" was admitted to clean and debride the area around her right cheek, radiograph her skull and take tissue samples for analysis to see whether there was any underlying disease process. Much to our disappointment, the pathologist was so concerned by the abnormal behaviour of the cells observed that he made a tentative diagnosis of cancer. Needless to say there was a great deal of despondency by all concerned.

However after careful discussion with her owners and close scrutiny of the x-rays we decided to attempt to remove a section of her cheekbone (zygomatic arch) in the hope of making her more comfortable. Although she was a "very old girl" she was still bright, lively and in very good condition.

Surgery went well and I was hopeful that, by removing the section of bone, we had at least made an impact on her disease without compromising what she already had.

"Epey" recovered very quickly and her wound healed over beautifully. Little did we realise that when the pathologist examined our second sample he realised that the very reactive, rapidly dividing cells were a result of a bone infection (osteomyelitis) and not cancer. This underlines the difficulties involved by the pathology department in making an accurate diagnosis when there is lots of inflammatory cells around.

Not that "Epey" cares as she has recovered completely and is simply waiting for her whiskers to reach their full length!

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Epey's right cheek showing lytic area where bone has been destroyed.



Epey's left cheek showing normal bone architecture

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