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"Jasper" - cat with Perianal Abscess



Jasper

I spend a surprising amount of my clinical time with my hand up patient's bottoms.....much to the horror of our work experience students who have yet to witness Rolf Harris indulge in this unsavoury part of a clinical examination!

Despite my twenty years of experience I concede that I have never "warmed" to this important but unpleasant aspect of veterinary medicine. In fact I have often tried to empathise with my patients by reminding them that this procedure brings a tear to my eye as well as theirs.

I am further sympathetic to my smaller patients as the tools required for this examination (my hands!) are not available in a smaller size for their benefit. Consequently, when one of my feline patients, Jasper, had to undergo repeated rectal examinations for a persistent perianal abscess I endeavoured to be as gentle as possible!

Unfortunately for him, an abscess, which stemmed from one of his anal glands, failed to resolve despite rigorous treatment. Additionally, a lump which was only apparent by rectal examination continued to enlarge.

Needle biopsies were taken and cancer was diagnosed. Anal gland carcinoma is very rare in the cat and the first I have ever diagnosed in my career. Sadly, the rarity of the condition is of no consolation for the patient who is affected.

Radical surgery is generally the key to success but is impossible in this area for fear of permanent damage to the anal sphincter. Despite these limitations a clean surgical margin was achieved albeit narrow. We can but hope that there will be no recurrence or spread. However, this does illustrate the importance of a thorough clinical examination no matter how unpleasant for either patient or surgeon.

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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