



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



"Chaplin" - Gerbil with Tumor



Although pet rodents constitute only a small percentage of pets seen our practice, owners are as dedicated to those pets as are other owners to the more common dogs and cats.

Rodents make excellent pets, with low space, feeding and economic requirements. However it can sometimes be very difficult to pick up on diseases in them so I was glad that Miss Cleobury brought me her gerbil, Chaplin, as soon as she noticed a swelling on his tummy.

All male gerbils have a diamond shaped slightly pink-yellow and bald patch on their tummy. It is located at the site of their belly button. This is called the ventral scent gland. Especially on older animals it is quite easy to detect. The size of the gland is influenced by male hormones.

The ventral scent gland can get inflamed or develop tumours. The incidence of tumours is low in gerbils, but tumours in gerbils are usually malignant Therefore the treatment of choice will always be surgery. Chaplin was admitted and had his operation the next day.

Because gerbils have tiny blood vessels, it is impossible to give the anaesthetic agent directly in a blood vessel, like we would normally do in dogs and cats. In small rodents the anaesthetic is injected in the tummy. I excised Chaplin's tumour and put absorbable skin sutures in the skin, which do not need to be removed.

After the operation the aftercare is very important. All rodents and rabbits will get fluid therapy, so the anaesthetic agents are neutralised quicker, and they are kept warm in an incubator. Only when they have woken up fully will we send them home the same day. Chaplin had a slower recovery after his operation, and was kept in the incubator overnight to give him the best possible care. The next day he was running around again and reunited with his caring owner.

By Ingrid Segboer 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