

PARVOVIROSIS IN DOGS AND FACTORS INFLUENCING THEIR MORBIDITY

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Summary. Purpose: determining the frequency of parvovirus in dogs, its causes, the age of most frequently affected dogs, susceptibility of various breeds to the disease and influence of season and the sex of the patient.

Data about digestive tract disorders has been collected in 1997 – 2001 in LVA Dr. L.Kriaučeliūnas small animal clinic. Parvovirus was the most common infectious disease in dogs. In 1997 – 2001 it affected 6,2% of all clinic's patients, which makes 19,0% of digestive tract diseases in dogs.

All the patients of internal and infectious diseases sections of the clinic were registered and evaluated using routine methods of clinical assessment. In all cases when gastroenteritis was diagnosed, blood and coprological tests were performed. Blood samples were analyzed using "QBC VET AUTOREADER" because a characteristic feature of parvovirus is leucopenia. An express method "Dia Med – Vet Parvo Kit" (Finland) was used to detect parvovirus antigen in faeces. Statistical data was evaluated using computer program "Graph Prism Version 2.0".

We found out that the number of dogs treated for digestive disorders in small animal clinic increased, while the number of parvovirus cases decreased. The largest number of patients in the clinic was registered in 2001 (2024 dogs). The highest morbidity with gastrointestinal disorders was registered in 1997 (43,5% of all patients), and parvovirus – 2000 (23,2% of all gastrointestinal diseases). The lowest morbidity was registered in 2001, total gastrointestinal disorders being 18,3% of all clinical cases, and parvovirus being 15,7% of all gastrointestinal diseases.

Mixed breeds were the majority of dogs diagnosed with parvovirus. In 1997 they were 51,4% of all parvovirus cases, 1998 – 63,5%, 1999 – 62,2%, 2000 – 58,4%, 2001 – 53,5%. The most frequently affected purebred dogs were rottweilers (6,7 – 20,7%) and German shepherds (7,3 – 13,5%).

The highest morbidity with parvovirus was registered in summer (38,0%) and autumn (28,2%), the lowest morbidity – in winter (19,5%) and spring (14,3%). The influence of season can be explained due to the fact that spring is the time when the majority of litters are born, so in summer the susceptible dog population increases.

We found out that 3 – 6 months old pups are the ones that mostly are affected by parvovirus. In 1997 3 months old pups prevailed (18,1%), 1998 – 4 months old pups (18,3%), 1999 – 4 months old pups (25,6%), 2000 – 6 months old pups (16,8%), and 2001 – 6 months old pups (22,4%). Pups younger than 3 months old were rarely affected.

We found out that the greatest difference between the number of ill males and females was among the mixed-breed pups, the number of affected males being in the range of 60% – 85%, and females – 15% – 40%. Among purebred dogs the ratio between affected males and females was approximately 1:1.

Keywords: dogs, gastrointestinal diseases, parvovirus, age, breed.