Oral presentations

Comparison of behaviour in blind and sighted dogs

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OBJECTIVES

Assessing welfare of blind dogs requires an objective evaluation of their behaviour. Here we sought to compare the behaviour of blind and visual dogs to determine which measures would be best to assess their welfare.

METHODS

The behaviours of twenty blind dogs and twenty matched visual dogs were evaluated by documenting their behaviours at intervals of 30 seconds over a ten minute period in a 10 m by 5 m room. The number of times they were observed performing a specific behaviour (sniffing, tail wagging, standing, sitting, lying, staring, looking around,

interacting with the observer, ear-raising, wandering, whining, growling or barking) was documented. These data were compared for blind and visual dogs. A rating system based on Gosling's cross-species personality traits was used to assess the curiosity, friendliness, playfulness, alertness, aggressiveness of dogs and how alert and attentive, subdued or anxious they appeared to be during the test.

RESULTS

The only significant differences between blind and visual dogs was in ear raising, tail wagging and looking around, all of which occurred significantly more in visual than blind dogs. No other behaviours were observed to be significantly different in either group. Personality trait assessment suggested that blind dogs were less friendly and more anxious than visual dogs although such an evaluation is substantially more subjective than the evaluation of specific behaviours and so more difficult to use in an objective manner.

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

This comparison of behaviours in blind and visual dogs suggests that few behaviour traits are significantly different between blind and visual dogs.

A descriptive retrospective study of 11 cases of neurogenic dry eye in a referral population and the response to pilocarpine treatment

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OBJECTIVES

To assess the response to pilocarpine in dogs with neurogenic dry eye in a UK referral centre.

METHODS

A descriptive retrospective study reviewing medical records from dogs with neurogenic dry eye treated with

oral pilocarpine and/or topical pilocarpine (0.1%, four times daily), at a UK referral centre, between 2015 and 2018. Cases were excluded if there were low Schirmer tear test (STT) values bilaterally, if the follow up time was less than thirty days and if surgical measures were undertaken within the first thirty days.

RESULTS

Medical records from 11 cases, 7 females and 4 males with mean age of 10 years (5y5m to 16y3m) were reviewed. Seven cases (64%) were positive for pilocarpine treatment and return to normal STT (15–25 mm/minute) values after treatment. The average time to normal tear production on treatment was 34 days (range of 15–53 days) and the average time for initial response was 7.7 days (range 2 to 17 days). There was no correlation between xeromycteria (dry nose) and response to pilocarpine treatment. The number of systemic drops until positive response varied between individuals, from 0.8 drops/10 kg, to 7 drops/10 kg. There is individual variation in the dose tolerated systemically and the dose required for a positive response.

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

In conclusion, you should trial treatment with pilocarpine for at least 34 days in dogs diagnosed with neurogenic dry eye prior to opting for surgical intervention.

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