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Clinical Article
A Typical Case of Atresia Ani in Sheep

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ABSTRACT

Atresia ani is a failure of development of the anal opening. It is a congenital abnormality, manifested clinically by an absence of feces, dullness, anorexia with abdominal distension, discomfort and straining at an attempt to defecate. Rectal lumen usually bulges subcutaneously at normal site of the anus when the abdomen is compressed. Surgical treatment is the only course of action . This paper reports a case of female sheep with atresia ani and also gives the surgical procedure adopted.

Key Words: Atresia ani; Female sheep; Surgery

Atresia ani is a failure of development of the anal opening. It is a congenital abnormality, manifested clinically by an absence of feces, dullness, anorexia with abdominal distension, discomfort and straining at an attempt to defecate. Rectal lumen usually bulges subcutaneously at normal site of the anus when the abdomen is compressed. Surgical treatment is the only course of action and its success depends on the extent of rectal development (Roberts, 1971; Martin & Aitken, 1991; Rebhun, 1995).

Tailessness, anury or perosmus acaudatus is seen as a common defect in dairy and beef cattle and sheep characterized by a lack of coccygeal vertebrae. Polydactyly (extra digit) is a dominant, autosomal character with a variable expression. The extra toe may hang loosely from the skin or be attached with normal bones (Roberts, 1971).

Different animals were received in the Surgery Clinic of College of Veterinary Science, Lahore with atresia ani in past few years. Most of the animals were females, which were confused as males. In sheep recto-vaginal fistula was also noticed with this abnormality. The case of atresia ani with the longest duration of diagnosis and treatment brought to the hospital was a female sheep of 25 days old. The case under discussion was a 3-day old ovine male kid with the history of straining and absence of feces. On clinical examination, it was found that the animal had atresia ani, absence of tail and instead it was having a 5th limb attached at the perineal area. There was no movement in the extra limb and it was attached loosely with sacral vertebrae. It appeared like hind limb on account of hock joint like development and there were improper joints within the limb. Distally the limb was comprised of two feet i.e., four digits. The animal was depressed, anorectic and straining for defecation.

Surgical Treatment

On abdominal compression, the animal developed a bulge at the right dorso-lateral aspect of junction of extra limb at perineal area. The site was selected for operation and prepared for surgery. The animal was operated upon under local infiltration anesthesia with Lignocaine HCl 2% solution injected subcutaneously. After the cruciate skin incision, the blind rectum was identified and opened, which voided feces and air on abdominal compression. The rectal walls were sutured with the skin. The animal was alert and active after the surgery.

Atresia ani has been reported by a number of authors in the past mostly in sheep (Martin & Aitken, 1991) and other animals (Blowey & Waverly, 1990). Tailessness has also been reported in sheep (Roberts, 1971), but no reference has been reported for a 5th limb instead of tail with the absence of anal opening. Such cases of atresia ani with normal rectal development are surgically treated with 100% success rates provided the anal sphincter is not damaged. It is suggested that the young ones must be examined thoroughly after birth, particularly for atresia ani and treated instantly to save their lives.

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