MALASSEZIAL DERMATITIS IN A CAT-A CASE REPORT

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Malassezia pachydermatis is commonly found on the skin of most cats and dogs. This yeast normally exists in the ear canal, anal sacs, vagina, and rectum without creating any problems. But in some cases, they can grow and reproduce in abnormal numbers and result in clinical disease. The most common symptom of Malassezial dermatitis in cats are hair loss, chin acne, redness, and seborrhoea.

A Tom cat aged eight years was presented to the University Veterinary hospital, Mannuthy with a complaint of hair loss and skin lesions on ears, face and neck (Fig.1&2). On clinical examination areas of alopecia with redness and seborrhoea were observed. Skin scrapings were collected from the lesions and were subjected to direct microscopical examination with10 per cent potassium hydroxide. No fungal spores or elements could be detected on microscopical examination of skin scrapings. The skin scrapings were also subjected to fungal culture in Sabouraud's Dextrose Agar (SDA) supplemented with Chloramphenicol. Cultural examination did not yield any fungal or yeast growth up to four weeks. The impression smears from the lesions stained with Leishman stain revealed presence of numerous budding yeast cells suggestive of *Malassezia* spp. (Fig.3). The animal was treated with Ketoconazole @10 mg /Kg BW orally and topical application of ketoconazole shampoo (once in 4 days) for a period of two weeks. The condition of the animal improved by seventh day and it was advised to continue treatment for two more weeks.

Fig.1 Alopecia and seborrhoeic dermatitis on the face

Malassezia pachydermatis is the commonly isolated species from the external ear canal and mucosae of healthy cats and cats with otitis externa and dermatitis (Greene,

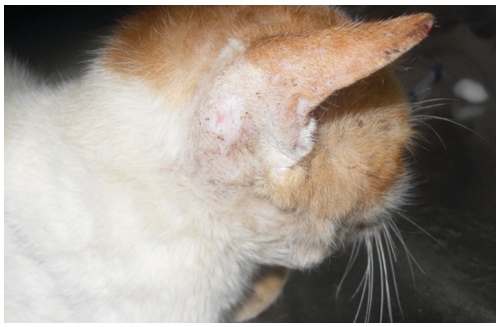

Fig.2 Erythematous and seborrhoeic lesions on the ears

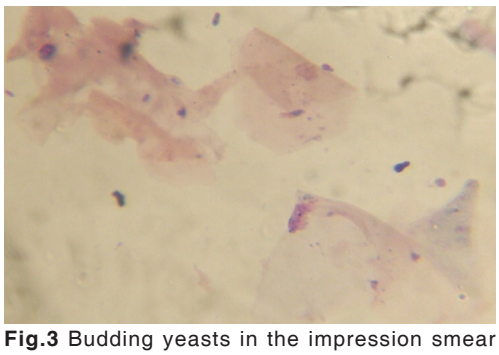

Fig.3 Budding yeasts in the impression smear (Leishman stain x 1000)

1998). *Malassezia pachydermatis* is non-lipid dependant and considered as nonpathogenic, but can become an opportunistic pathogen when the microclimatic factors are suitable or when the host defense mechanisms are impaired. In addition to this species lipid dependant species such as *M. symbodialis, M, globosa and M. furfur* have also been isolated from cats (Bond *et al*., 1997; Crespo *et al*., 1999). Failure of growth of malassezia in SDA with chloramphenicol suggests the possibility of infection with a lipid dependant species, which requires supplementation of lipids in the form of olive oil in the media. Treatment with ketoconazole was found to be effective as suggested by Greene (1998) and Macy (1989).

Summary

Malassezial dermatitis in a tom cat and its successful treatment with topical and oral ketoconazole is presented

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