A RETROSPECTIVE STUDY OF 409 SUSPECTED CANE TOAD (Rhinella marina) TOXICITIES: EPIDEMIOLOGY AND CLINICAL FEATURES

Animal Emergency Services: W Crosby; G Dodds; K E Jones; I Kat; R Nye; S L West. Brisbane, QLD Australia.

Introduction: Cane toad intoxication is a common condition in regions in which toads Rhinella marina (formerly Bufo marinus) are found. Clinically, intoxication can range from mild clinical signs requiring no veterinary attention to severe, sometimes fatal disease requiring intensive 24-hour care.

Aim: To determine the epidemiology, clinical signs and blood gas abnormalities of canines exposed to bufo toxins.

Design: A retrospective analysis of 409 suspected and witnessed clinical cases seen in dogs presented to the Animal Emergency Services between 2013 to 2016.

Procedure: All cases of diagnosed cane toad intoxications were analysed for the following factors; breed, age, gender, time of year, presenting clinical signs, blood gas results, treatments administered and outcome.

Results: Males were more commonly affected (57%). Terrier breed dogs accounted for 36.2%. Intoxications were most prevalent in spring and summer (78%). Common clinical signs included salivation (84%) injected mucous membranes (66%) altered mentation (48%) vomiting (39%) muscle rigidity (32.5%) seizure activity (21%). Diazepam was administered to 35% of dogs. Thirteen dogs required intubation, of these, 4 died or were euthanised. Clinical improvement was observed within 4 hours or less in 75% of hospitalised cases where data was recorded. Blood gas analysis was performed on 163 dogs. Dogs that died or were euthanised were significantly more likely to have a hyperlactaemia, metabolic acidosis or hyperglycaemia than dogs that were hospitalised or discharged following consultation. 54% of cases were discharged following consultation, 42% were hospitalised and recovered and 3 % either died or were euthanised.

References:


Reeves MP, A retrospective report of 90 dogs with suspect cane toad (Bufo marines) toxicity. AVJ 2004; 82: 608-611

