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Successful management of notoedric mange in two domestic cats: A case report

ASMITA NARANG¹, GURPREET SINGH PREET², JASNIT SINGH¹ and HARKIRAT SINGH³

¹Department of Veterinary Medicine, ² Department of Teaching Veterinary Clinical Complex, ³Department of Veterinary Parasitology, Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Ludhiana *Corresponding author's email id: gurpreet754@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: This report describes a case of notoedric mange in two cats in a single household and successful management with ivermectin therapy. A six-month-old tom cat was presented to Small Animal Clinics, Teaching Veterinary Clinical Complex (TVCC), Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Ludhiana with a primary complaint of severe itching and alopecic lesions on the face and ears for the past 10 days. Owner also had intense pruritus over the hands and small erythematic crusted papules on the wrists and arms. Upon physical examination, crust formation was observed along with hyperkeratosis and alopecia distributed over ear margins, face, and legs. The cat exhibited intense pruritus. All vital parameters were within normal limits. Laboratory examination of skin scrapings from the lesions showed the presence of adult mites of *Notoedres cati*. Thus, the cat was diagnosed with Notoedric Mange. The affected cat was treated with Inj. Ivermectin @ 200 µg/kg SC once a week for three weeks along with oral prednisolone @ 0.5 mg/kg OD for 3 days, then alternate days for 3 times, and oral administration of 2 ml of multi-vitamin and mineral syrup daily. Significant improvement was noticed by complete clinical recovery in two weeks along with the absence of mites in skin scrapings after 14 days post treatment.

Keywords: Cat, ivermectin, Notoedres cati, prednisolone, zoonotic

Notoedric mange, also known as feline scabies, is highly contagious skin disease in cats caused by a burrowing mite, Notoedres cati. The mite can opportunistically infest other animals viz., dogs and rabbits (Narang et al., 2020). Notoedric mange is zoonotic, thus requires immediate and appropriate treatment and education to the owners about handling the cats (Foster and Foil, 2003). The mite is transmitted between cats and to humans by direct contact, and rarely indirectly from the contaminated environment. Various stages of the mite viz. eggs, larvae, nymphs and adults live in the skin and don't survive out of the host (Deplazes et al., 2016). The mites are smaller than Sarcoptes, and life cycle is similar to that of the sarcoptic mange mite (Scott et al., 2001).

Notoedric mange is considered as a rare skin condition in cats and is mainly seen in stray cats. Cats with this condition are presented with severe pruritis and skin lesions *viz.*, papules, alopecia, erythema, excoriations, crusts, scales, hyperkeratosis and lichenification. The initial lesions appear on the edge of ear pinna, and further spread on head and neck. The lesions sometimes can spread on the legs and perineum, which is facilitated by cat's habit of self-grooming (Miller *et al.*, 2017). Disease if not

treated, can prove fatal to both young and adult cats (Deplazes *et al.*, 2016). The condition is successfully treated with macrocyclic lactones. The present communication reports notoedric mange in two cats and its successful management with subcutaneous ivermectin therapy.

Case History and observations

A six-month-old male cat was presented with a primary complaint of severe itching and alopecic lesions on the face (Figure 1), ears (Figure 2), and limbs (Figure 3) for the past 10 days to Small Animal Clinics, TVCC, Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Ludhiana. The owner also informed about pruritis over his hands along with small erythematic crusted papules on the wrists and arms (Figure 4). Normal appetite and activity of the cat was informed. Alopecia and crusty lesions reportedly started from the ear pinna and gradually progressed to other facial regions. The owner also informed similar but mild lesions in other cats and that both the cats were kept indoors and reared in and outside of the house. The spread of infection from one cat to another was reported. Cat was thoroughly examined for the presence of lesions on different parts of the body. Upon physical examination of the presented cat, crust formation was observed along with hyperkeratosis and alopecia distributed over the ear margins, face, and legs. The cat exhibited intense pruritus. All vital parameters were within normal limits.

Deep skin scrapings were collected from different sites presenting lesions, using a #10 blunt scalpel blade in 10% potassium hydroxide solution and were sent for laboratory examination. Microscopic examination of skin scrapings from the lesions showed infestation of adult mites of *Notoderes cati* (Figure 5-6). The mites were identified as *Notoedres cati* based on their shape and presence of dorsal anus and morphology of legs, suckers and position of anus as described by Soulsby (1982). The diagnosis of Notoedric mange in the cat was made based on its clinical presentation, a skin scraping examination, and consideration of its zoonotic potential.

The cat was treated with Inj. chlorpheniramine maleate @ 0.4 mg per kg bwt intramuscular followed by inj. Ivermectin 0.2 mg S/C (total dose) once a week for 3 weeks and Liq. Povidone-iodine (1:1 dilution) over the lesions topically twice a day, in addition to supportive care which included oral prednisolone @ 0.5 mg/kg for 3 days OD then alternate days for 3 times for control of pruritis. Similar, treatment was prescribed for the fellow cat with mild lesions which was not presented to us. Efficacy of the drug was assessed on the basis of

clinical recovery and skin scrapings examination at weekly intervals post therapy. Both the cats responded well after one shot of ivermectin. Remission of clinical signs and marked progressive improvement in both the cats was observed on 7th day of treatment. Following the treatment, no unfavourable effects were noticed. By day seven, the itching had stopped. Skin scrapings were found negative 14 days post treatment and animal showed marked improvement in clinical symptoms (Figure 7).

DISCUSSION

The present communication reports successful therapeutic management of *Notoedres cati* associated mange infestation in cat with ivermectin. Notoedric mange is clinically characterized by intense pruritic and crusting lesions on the ears, head, neck, back, and feet and but can spread over the entire body (Bowman *et al.*, 2008). Similar lesions and site of distribution was observed in this case. Due to contagious nature of notoedric mange and similar clinical manifestations, it was presumed that the fellow cat was suffering from same condition and was given the same treatment. The fellow cat responded well to the treatment and thus the diagnosis was confirmed. The important point for consideration is that if one cat is diagnosed with



Fig. 1: Cat having alopecia and hypotrichosis on the face



Fig. 2: Tip of ear showing scaling, exudation and crust formation



Fig. 3: Ventral area of paw in cat showing alopecia, scaling, exudation and crust formations



Fig. 4: Forearm of owner showing small erythematic crusted papules on the wrist



skin scrapping of cat (40X)

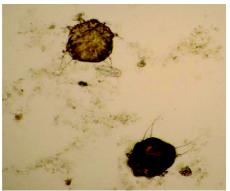


Fig. 5: Notoedres cati mite recovered from Fig. 6: Multiple Notoedres cati mites along with eggs recovered from skin scrapping of cat (10X)

feline scabies, all the cats at same household require similar therapeutic protocols.

Lesions of notoedric mange appear initially on the edge of ear pinna (Miller et al., 2017), and then spread on head and neck, and ultimately covers the entire body (Scott et al., 2001). In the present case, only the facial region was involved. The characteristic itching and hair loss pattern are often sufficient for diagnosing notoedric mange in cats (Foster and Foil, 2003). Mange lesions in cats cover the entire body and the cat presented to us was suffering acutely, whereas Sivajothi et al. (2015) reported a case of notoedric mange in two cats with chronic skin problems and intense pruritus as a chief complaint.

There are other reports mentioning that affected cat owners suffered from intense pruritus and lesions on their hands (Sivajothi et al., 2015), which was also observed in this case. The affected owner was advised to get consultation by a human dermatologist. A presumptive diagnosis of mange in humans can be based on history of contact with the affected cats and history of pruritus and distribution of inflammatory papules on hands. Humans develop intense pruritus without any mite burrows within a few hours of initial contact with the infested cats. As Notoedres cati mange is contagious to humans and other animals, owners of infected cats need to exercise caution while handling them, and thus the disease requires prompt and adequate treatment (Foster and Foil, 2003).

The affected cat was treated with subcutaneous



Fig. 7: Cat after 3 treatments with ivermectin showing marked improvement, hair growth and complete remission of clinical signs

ivermectin once a week for three treatments. No adverse reactions were observed during or post treatment. These findings are in accordance with Kumar et al. (2008). Scott et al. (2001) also reported subcutaneous injections of ivermectin as a choice of treatment for notoedric mange in cats and rodents, besides selamectin as a spot on (Chand et al., 2014). However, successful treatment of notoedric mange by oral administration of ivermectin twice weekly was also reported (Sivajothi et al., 2015). Ivermectin acts on GABA neurotransmission at some sites blocking intraneuronal stimulation of excitatory

motor neurons, which leads to flaccid paralysis. Adams (2001) suggested that ivermectin may exert its effect through action on glutamate-gated Cl" ion conductance at the postsynaptic membrane or neuromuscular endplate. The present case's successful recovery demonstrated the value of subcutaneous ivermectin medication in treating feline scabies in cats.

Summary

This report details the successful treatment of notoedric mange, caused by *Notoedres cati*, in two cats using ivermectin. Ivermectin was administered subcutaneously at $200 \, \mu g/kg$ weekly for three weeks, leading to complete clinical recovery and absence of mites in skin scrapings.

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