

Chronic Pain and losing the 'zest for life' – how the Pain Clinic can help.

History:

Bayley Sampson is a 7yr old Labrador retriever who had lost his 'zest for life'. Initially diagnosed with bilateral elbow dysplasia in June 2004, his condition has been managed with carprofen and more recently a course of pentosan polysulphate. In February this year Bayley was presented to his vet with severe lameness and his owners were considering euthanasia.

Radiographs displayed severe osteoarthritis in both elbows. Different non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs had been tried but he did not respond well. Tramadol and carprofen, with strict rest appeared to reduce the severity of his pain. However, it had become obvious to his owners that he was really not the happy dog he once was and so he was referred to the pain clinic.

Presentation:

Bayley hobbled into the consulting room with the classic stiff gait of a dog who didn't know which forelimb to favour. He was reluctant to settle or lie down and it was very obvious he did not want to step onto the comfortable bed provided, for fear of it slipping under his feet. After allowing Bayley to wander around whilst a detailed history was taken, he finally settled enough to lie down and allow examination with minimum stress. Soft tissues associated with neck, spine, sacrum, shoulders, elbows and antebrachii were carefully palpated. He had very tense muscles over the caudal neck and shoulder region and myofascial trigger points were identified in the infraspinatus and triceps muscles. It became obvious much of his pain was caused by soft tissue changes brought on by altered gait and not simply the arthritic elbows themselves.

Treatment:

Bayley relaxed and appeared to fall asleep during careful deep tissue massage in the consult. Some time was spent showing the owners what they could achieve at home in combination with heat applied over the shoulder and elbow prior to massage. Various options were discussed with Bayley's owners and a course of gabapentin* was prescribed. This was given alongside tramadol* and carprofen which Bayley was already on. Sadie-May Phelan, LVS hydrotherapy nurse, assessed Bayley during an introductory hydrotherapy session.

Advice was also given for general considerations around the house such as putting down non-slip rugs over laminate floors and providing deep comfortable bedding at or near floor level. Bayley's owners were asked to take him for short walks only and to encourage rest and apply warm 'wheat bags' after a longer than normal walk – such as when on holiday.

Follow up:

Bayley was seen 5 weeks later and walked in with a wagging tail. The owners reported his first hydrotherapy session had gone extremely well and his general comfort had much improved. Since then he has gradually managed with less tramadol and hopefully eventually this drug can be withdrawn completely. In the pain clinic our team of vets and nurses work with the owner and referring veterinary surgeon to bring about improvements in quality of life for our patients, providing follow-up consultation and advice where needed. **For £200* we are able to offer a full referral consultation including pain assessment, treatment/medication plan, to include initial hydrotherapy and acupuncture if deemed appropriate. If you would like to refer a patient for assessment please contact us through the normal referral route.**



*Medication costs not included in the price. Tramadol and gabapentin do not hold marketing authorisation in the UK for use in veterinary species and as such are used via the cascade. Clients should always give informed consent for such 'off label' use of human pharmaceutical preparations.

Contact Reception on 0117 928 9420/9447 if you would like to refer or discuss any condition with our Pain Clinic Team.