

They Don't Deserve to Hurt: Chronic Pain

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Shilo

- Lab, FS, 5 years old when we met her
- At 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ years of age, ruptured left ACL - - large animal veterinarian told owners to "put her in a crate for 3 months & she'll be fine"
- At 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ years of age a horse kicked her & tore ligaments in the right hock - - owners given the same advice

Shilo

- Met her in January 2006
 - Could not walk across the living room
 - Could not touch the dog to pet her
 - Owners arrived thinking they would be euthanizing her
 - Saw an article in the newspaper & believed we were her last resort

Shilo

- Examination:
 - At physical examination, we scored her pain 8/10 along her spinal segments, trigger points in the thoracic muscles, T/L junction, L/S junction, and over acupuncture hip diagnostic points
 - Could not examine dog without a muzzle - - she anticipated every move we made as potentially painful

Shilo

- Examination (cont'd):
 - Right hock joint twice the diameter of the left
 - Left stifle twice the diameter of the right with obvious bone-on-bone crepitus on manipulation
 - Heartbreaking to see such a young dog in such excruciating pain

Shilo

- Examination (cont'd):
 - Radiographs of spine
 - Surprisingly clear of bridging spondylosis lesions or other gross pathology
 - Time to forge ahead!!!

Shilo

- Plan:
 - This dog had profound maladaptive pain! Serious windup that we absolutely needed to "unwind"
 - Metabolic profile
 - CBC, Chemistry Panel, ERD
 - Parameters within normal limits (neg. ERD)
 - Thyroid level
 - Profoundly hypothyroid

Shilo

- Plan (cont'd):
 - Break the pain cycle
 - NSAID coupled with gabapentin
 - Deramaxx 100mg - - $\frac{1}{2}$ tab per day
 - Gabapentin 300mg - - 1 capsule BID
 - Informed owner of long-term strategy to titrate doses to lowest effective doses
 - Informed owner of needed commitment to follow-up assessments on a regular basis

Shilo

- Plan (cont'd):
 - Modify home environment to better accommodate this dog's realities and limitations
 - Raise food & water dishes to mid-humerus level
 - Carpeted surfaces throughout house
 - Ramp to get into & out of vehicle
 - Padded bed for sleeping

Shilo

- Plan (cont'd):
 - Thyroid replacement hormone
 - Nutritional profile to assist with long-term management of OA
 - Hill's Prescription Diet Canine j/d®
 - Measured portions to manage body condition (this diet is EXCEPTIONALLY palatable - - both the good news and the bad news...)
 - Glucosamine/chondroitin, omega-3 FA's, antioxidants

Shilo

- First follow-up at 14 days
 - Pain score reduced from 8/10 to 2/10
 - Owner wept openly as she recounted the transformation in her dog
 - Dog was able to walk around the house again, including up and down stairs

Shilo

- Pain reassessments every 2 - 3 weeks for the first few months
 - Remember the "3 R's" of pain medicine - - "Recheck", "Reassess", and "Revise"!!!
 - By mid-February we reduced the Deramaxx dose by half
 - By mid-April we had reduced gabapentin dose by half

Shilo

- Dog stable, comfortable, and active for 1 year
- Able to walk the perimeter of 80 acres
- Drug doses stabilized
- January 2007 began physiotherapy







Shilo

- Physiotherapy every 2 weeks (owner drives 1 ½ hours one way) with "homework"
- Early February began reducing drug doses again
- Late February dog completely removed from all drug therapy for pain - - dog will now return every 4 - 8 weeks for physiotherapy "tune-up"

Shilo

