



CANINE TRANSMISSIBLE VENEREAL TUMOR

Transmissible venereal tumors (TVT) are a sexually transmitted disease which affects areas of the external genitalia. They often present as ulcerated masses that easily bleed in the area of the penis, prepuce, or vulva. It can also be found in other areas such as the nasal cavity, oral cavity, and other skin (subcutaneous) areas. Studies have shown that the body's immune response plays a large role in the progression of this disease.

How are TVTs diagnosed?

Most dogs with TVTs have a history of being stray dogs prior to adoption by their owners. The definitive diagnosis of TVTs is accomplished by either aspiration cytology or biopsy procedure for histopathology. Spread or metastasis is not common with this tumor type; however, evaluation of the local lymph nodes is necessary.

What is the treatment?

Many forms of therapy can be used in the treatment of TVTs. Surgery can be used for small individual lesions. However, most TVTs are too extensive for surgery and other treatment methods must be used. The most cost effective way to treat TVTs is the use of chemotherapy. A variety of chemotherapeutic methods can be used. Vincristine has extremely good response rates with complete cures achieved in over 90% of cases. Treatment involves 4-6 treatments generally. For refractory cases, other chemotherapy agents have also been very effective and these include cyclophosphamide, doxorubicin, and methotrexate.

What is the prognosis?

Overall prognosis is very good with the use of chemotherapy. The use of Vincristine has provided a cure in approximately 90-95% of all cases. Surgery alone can result in a high recurrence rate of anywhere from 20-60% of all cases.