

ORTHOMANUAL THERAPY FOR TREATMENT OF SUSPECTED THORACOLUMBAR DISC DISEASE: A RETROSPECTIVE STUDY.

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The objective of this study was to evaluate the efficacy of veterinary orthomannual therapy in dachshunds with suspected thoracolumbar disc disease. The basic principle of orthomannual medicine is to assume a symmetrical development of the skeleton. The therapeutic action of orthomannual therapy in humans can be defined as "a force used on a malpositioned or malfunctioning osseous structure of the spine using a short lever within a segment in the direction of the natural position or function. The force applied is either pulsated or imparted through a fast impulse" The misalignment of skeletal components can cause a loss of function, movement limitations and pain. It is theorized that correcting the misalignment of the vertebrae diminishes the pressure on the intervertebral disc and creates an environment that facilitates an improvement in the neurological state.

Clinical data from 261 dachshunds that were treated for suspected thoracolumbar disc disease between 2003 and 2008 were retrospectively reviewed. Individual data included signalment and history, neuro-

logical evaluations, orthomanual aspects, data with relation to the orthomanual treatments. The initial neurological state was grade I in 115 animals (44.1%), grade II in 59 animals (22.6%), grade III in 27 animals (10.3%), grade IV in 52 animals (19.9%) and grade V in 8 animals (3.1%).

Two weeks after treatment, 113 animals (43.3%) improved from their initial neurological grade to a normal state. A majority of the animals initially diagnosed as grade I, II or IV exhibited an improvement of one grade, whereas a majority of animals initially diagnosed as grade III or V exhibited an improvement of two grades. Three months after the second consultation (i.e., at 104 days), 135 out of the 197 animals (68.5%) examined, exhibited an improvement from their initial neurological grade to normal. A majority of animals initially diagnosed as grade I exhibited an improvement of one grade, a majority of animals initially diagnosed as grade II, III or V exhibited an improvement of two grades, and a majority of animals initially diagnosed as grade IV exhibited an improvement of three grades. Six months after the first treatment, neurological improvements from the initial grade to normal were observed in 180 animals (69.0%). A majority of animals initially diagnosed as grade I improved by one grade, and a majority of animals initially diagnosed as grade II, III or V exhibited an improvement of two grades. A majority of animals initially diagnosed as grade IV improved by four grades.

Veterinary orthomanual therapy is a conservative and non-medical form of therapy, which is minimally stressful for the animal and inexpensive compared to other methods. The results of this study demonstrate that this therapy is effective in a large proportion of the reviewed dachshunds with suspected TLDD. Veterinary orthomanual therapy can be considered an adjunct modality for the conservative treatment of chondrodystrophic dogs with IVDD.