

Epidural Anaesthesia In Koalas

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Recent changes to the Code of Practice for the rehabilitation of sick, injured or orphaned koalas (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) in Queensland, has led to an increased number of female koalas presented to the RSPCA wildlife clinic for ovariectomy. Ovariectomy is indicated in female koalas with reproductive disease secondary to infection with *Chlamydia pecorum*. Chlamydial infections in female koalas can cause significant reproductive pathology including ovarian cysts, uterine cysts, pyometra and infertility. Adhesions with adjacent tissues and chronic pain are common sequelae of ovarian cysts, presenting challenges for the perioperative pain management of this species. In addition, koalas are particularly sensitive to the effects of opioids, limiting their use in pain management. The use of epidural anaesthesia, although widely practiced in companion animal medicine, is yet to be described for koalas. Here we present a series of case studies detailing the administration of epidural anaesthesia in koalas prior to ovariectomy and their intra and postsurgical outcomes.