

A Double-Edged Sword: The Role of Glucocorticoids in Cats with Chronic Enteropathy

Jane Yu

Animal Referral Hospital, Canberra

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Chronic enteropathy (CE) in cats is characterised by persistent or recurrent clinical signs of gastrointestinal disease such as vomiting, diarrhoea, weight loss, inappetence or a combination of these clinical signs for more than 3 weeks.^{1,2} Cats with CE are typically categorized according to their responses to treatment: food responsive enteropathy, inflammatory bowel disease and low-grade intestinal T cell lymphoma.^{1,2}

Glucocorticoids remain a cornerstone in managing feline CE, in cats that fail to respond to diet trials.^{1,3} However, despite their widespread use, glucocorticoids pose clinical challenges due to their broad systemic effects and the limited availability of species-specific evidence in cats. This presentation explores the multifaceted role of glucocorticoids, particularly prednisolone, in the treatment of feline CE. Its indications, mechanisms of action, dosages evidence supporting its efficacy and potential adverse effects will be discussed. A major focus of this talk is the unique physiological responses of cats to glucocorticoids, which differ from those of dogs. These differences, which include lipid metabolism, coagulation, immunomodulation, glucose metabolism and neurological effects, have important implications for therapeutic decision-making and adverse effect profiles.

Finally, practical considerations will be discussed including treatment monitoring, tapering protocols and alternative or adjunctive therapy. Understanding the double-edged nature of glucocorticoids is essential for optimizing clinical outcomes in cats with CE, while minimizing the risk of adverse effects.

References

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