Incidence of Coccidiosis in Domestic Pigeons (Columba livia) - A Case Report

S. Ramesh1, C. Soundararajan2, S. Subapriya3*, R. Sokkalingam4 and S. Muthukrishnan5

1Centralised Instrumentation Laboratory, 2Department of Veterinary Parasitology, 3Centralised Clinical Laboratory, Madras Veterinary College, Chennai-07, India 4Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), Chennai-07, India 5Department of Veterinary Anatomy, Veterinary College and Research Institute, Tirunelveli, India

*Corresponding author

Abstract

A total of 40 faecal samples were examined from pigeons belonging to a pet owner at Chennai with the history of inappetance and blood tinged droppings. Microscopic examination of droppings revealed oocysts of Eimeria spp. The birds became active and alert with normal feeding habits after 7 days of treatment with amprolium soluble powder.

Introduction

Coccidiosis caused by Eimeria spp. is a common parasitic disease posing a serious problem in pigeons. It is most commonly seen in young pigeons and only rarely in adult birds. About nine species of the genus Eimeria were described in these birds, but only three species are of significant, Eimeria columbae, Eimeria columbarium and Eimeria labbeana. The most pathogenic and frequently observed species is E. labbeana. Coccidiosis of pigeons may occasionally be seen in young squabs, especially when reared intensively and when hygiene is poor, while older ones serve as carrier and remain apparently healthy. The prevalence of pigeon coccidiosis in different countries of the world is 50-100% and mortality of 70% in juvenile pigeons (Balicka-Ramisz and Pilarczyk, 2014; Ali et al., 2015). The common signs include hunched posture, ruffled feathers, bloody or mucoid diarrhea, yawning, paralysis, weight loss and poor performance in racing pigeons. Clinical disease is most commonly seen in juvenile pigeons, but a high burden of coccidia can
also adversely affect racing performance in adult pigeons (Junghanns et al., 2009). The diagnosis can be confirmed on microscopic examination of droppings and the birds are treated with coccidiocidal drugs via feed or water. The present case reports an incidence of coccidiosis in domestic pigeons maintained by a pet owner in Chennai and effective treatment with amprolium.

Materials and Methods

A total number of 40 pigeons belonging to a private owner at Chennai were reported with the history of inappetance and blood tinged droppings for the last 2 days.

The droppings were collected and subjected to microscopic examination. Based on the laboratory findings, the birds were treated with amprolium soluble powder @ 5 gm per litre of water for 7 days.

Results and Discussion

Physical examination of the pigeons revealed dullness (Fig. 1).

The droppings voided by the birds were greenish white with blood tinged and watery in consistency. Microscopic examination of droppings revealed the presence of oocytes of *Eimeria spp* (Fig. 2). Out of forty samples examined, thirty samples were found to be positive for *Eimeria spp*. The birds became active and alert with normal feeding habit after seven days of treatment.

**Fig.1** Pigeons – Dullness

The present paper records an incidence of 75% of *Eimeria spp.* in domestic pigeons. Kommu et al., (2016) examined 370 faecal samples of pigeons and found 121 samples were positive for *Eimeria spp*. Marques et al., (2007) reported an incidence of 86.05% of coccidiosis in free living pigeons while an overall incidence of 19.44% and 33.3% in pigeons were reported by Mohammed et al., (2017) and Sivajothi and Sudhakara Reddy (2015) respectively.

**Fig.2** Pigeons- Droppings- *Eimeria* oocyst

References


Junghanns Maria-Elisabeth Krautwald, Ralph Zebisch, Volker Schmidt 2009

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