



Compassionate Care in Canine and Feline Oncologic Patients

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Editorial

The veterinary oncology is a science that grows continually, with more and more clients seeking treatment for their dogs and cats, once the cancer diagnosis has been established. The veterinary patients will always be an inspiration to the veterinarians, considering the high dedication of these animals with their owners.

The discovery of the cancer diagnosis in pets causes in the family environment several changes since this situation usually promotes great emotional conflict because cancer has the stigma of an incurable disease. Thus, the patients' survival time and of all its family is shaken by the fear of the unexpected experience that they will have to live. And, sometimes, face situations that will modify the pets' quality of life.

Owners of dogs and cats that receive the diagnosis of a malignant tumor end up going through different periods of adaptation to the disease and the treatments that their pets will undergo. Understanding how to face this serious illness can help both over the treatment.

Over the years in Veterinary Medicine, the technological advances in animal health have been offering essential improvements in the diagnosis and treatment of different types of cancer. The main modalities of cancer treatment are surgery, chemotherapy, and radiotherapy. Regarding localized tumors, surgery or radiotherapy are the most indicated therapeutic interventions. Chemotherapy is generally used for systemic treatment in patients with metastatic disease or adjunctively to complement the initial surgical treatment. The search and improvement of the quality of life of pets with cancer should always be the main focus during the oncological treatment.

The veterinary oncologists have direct contact with the patient and its owner, and they must pay attention to the relevance of giving compassionate and individualized care. Additionally, discovering the needs of the patient and its family, and establishing a reliable relationship. The development of the great interpersonal relationship is essential to the success of the therapy.

Any and all veterinary care provided is based on human relationship. People are different and therefore think differently. Thus, it is important

to consider that attending the pets and their tutors correspond to assist a heterogeneous public. When we introduce compassionate care in this context, we realize the importance of communication between the professional and the client to facilitate the trust-respect relationship.

It is important to say that veterinarians working in oncology are exposed in their day-to-day work, to situations that generate conflicts. Some examples are frequent death losses; the pressure that exposes the traditional medical model of responsibility for healing and longevity; the constant work with serious illnesses and the sadness of family members; and the frequent contact with the patient and family that leads to the creation of a bond of involvement with the problem lived.

Compassionate care during the oncological treatment allows us to create a closer relationship, finding solutions to problems that negatively impact the quality of life of the pets. In addition, it facilitates the performance and development of the therapy in a more adequate way, considering the patient as an individual with its own characteristics and, consequently, improving the efficacy of the treatment chosen.

Compassionate care practices promote well-being to the owner and the patient, increase the confidence during the treatment time and also the recovery, and it is up to the veterinarians to recognize the real importance of caring in cancer treatment.

Dogs and cats with cancer should not be considered as another case to be treated in another day of work. The multidisciplinary team needs to acquire a holistic vision, searching to understand the multiple relationships developed. It must be established and provide a professional approach deeply supportive, generating not only health but mainly life.

Finally, the diagnosis and living with a cancer patient promote emotional conflict in the patient's family, since they treat this disease as a fatality. Although the diagnosis and treatment of several types of cancer have been shown great technological advances, it is important to emphasize the compassionate care practice between the veterinarians and the multidisciplinary team. Over the cancer treatment, it is possible to create a closer relationship with the patients, finding solutions to problems that negatively impact on their quality of life.

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