

DIAPHRAGMATIC HERNIA

This type of hernia is mostly met with in dogs. It can occur in other animals. It can be a typical hernia when the animal is born with a fissure in the diaphragm. Mostly it is not a typical hernia, but it is a prolapse of the abdominal contents in the chest cavity as the result of rupture of the diaphragm. The prolapsed parts may be the stomach, spleen, pancreas, intestine, omentum/liver.

Accidents are the most common cause of rupture of the diaphragm.

Symptoms:

- ✓ Inherited cases of diaphragmatic hernia may not show any symptom. Traumatic cases show symptoms of dyspnea which may lead to asphyxia. The affected dog prefers the sitting position. The back is arched. The chest cavity can be asymmetric. Auscultation of the chest at the region of the prolapsed parts reveals a peristaltic sound and a very slight respiratory sound. Percussion of the chest may reveal a dull/a tympanic sound according to the type of the prolapsed contents. Animals given barium meal and x-rayed, it can be easy to diagnose the condition when the prolapsed parts are stomach/intestine.
- ✓ Cases of diaphragmatic hernia with rupture of the liver/spleen usually die within few hours. Other cases with prolapse of the intestine can live for a long time and the condition may become better.

Treatment:

- ✓ Prepare the animal and give a tranquilizer. General anaesthesia using a closed system apparatus of ether and oxygen/halothane and oxygen. The skin is incised along the curvature of the ribs (Ubersitter).
- ✓ The liver is pressed upon with a spatula/with the hand. The wound edges of the diaphragm are hold with 2 long forceps and sutured with interrupted/continuous suture after returning the abdominal contents to their position. The abdominal muscles are sutured and then the skin. Another way to suture the ruptured diaphragm is to make resection of some ribs then hold the cut edges of the diaphragm and suture as before. The easiest and preferable method is to open along the curvature of the ribs.