

# VETERINARY PRACTICE NEWS

THE INFORMATION LEADER FOR VETERINARY PRACTICE AND BUSINESS

Volume 19 • Number 4 • \$5.00

April 2007

www.vetpracticenews.com

## Unusual Recipients Get New Hips

Creatures great and small are benefiting from total hip replacement surgery, with two unusual animal surgeries occurring recently—one for a Yorkie, the other an alpaca.

Miami Veterinary Specialists in Miami recently performed a total hip replacement on a Yorkshire terrier named Monty.

The procedure has been available to large-breed dogs since 1974, but the technology is just starting to be used in small-breed dogs as little as 7 pounds, said Juan Sardinas, DVM, Dipl. ACVS, Dipl. ECVS, of Miami Veterinary Specialists.

He said he's not quite sure why it's taken so long for the shift to take place, but says it is a better alternative to the traditional femoral head and neck ostectomy.

"With FHO, it's easy to remove the head and neck, but sometimes the dog doesn't use the leg for weeks or never uses it well at all," Dr. Sardinas said. "Recovery from surgery is long and painful. The long-term result is not good."

In addition, the limb lacks normal range of motion and there is an upward displacement and limb shortening. Patients who undergo FHO also do not regain normal muscle mass and experience pain with manipulation, Sardinas said.

There is one drawback with total hip replacements—price. Total hip replacements can cost about \$4,000, whereas an FHO procedure can cost about \$1,500 to \$1,800. However, Sardinas said he doesn't believe this will not deter pet owners.

"Owners are beginning to ask for total hip replacement as an option," he said. "They want the best type of care possible for their pet."

Monty, who had been lame for several months prior to surgery, achieved normal weight bearing several days after the procedure.

"The day we brought him home, besides being a bit sluggish, he was back to normal," said Monty's owner, Gina Melnick. "Literally within a week, Monty was running



Drs. James Roush and David Anderson, above, oversee Shiloh being prepped for surgery. At right are Shiloh's before and after radiographs.



around the house and jumping."

Meanwhile, in Kansas, veterinarians at the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital at Kansas State University said they have completed the first total hip replacement on an alpaca.

Shiloh, a 3-year-old Suri alpaca, was taken to the teaching hospital in February by her owner, who had noticed Shiloh standing awkwardly near their barn.

Radiographs revealed coxofemoral luxation, a dislocated hip.

Shiloh was a good candidate for surgery because her condition had not reached an advanced stage of degeneration, said James Roush, DVM, professor and head of small animal surgery, who performed the operation, and David Anderson, DVM, professor and head of agricultural practices, who assisted.

Shiloh's case involved a list of unknowns because no veterinary medical literature existed about this procedure on an alpaca, Dr. Roush said. Shiloh was also three months pregnant.

The nearly two-hour procedure took place Feb. 14.

"We were very pleased, but re-



This is a radiograph of a Yorkshire terrier that underwent a total hip replacement.

mained cautiously optimistic because she still was at risk of infection and the newly implanted hip could luxate," Roush said.

On Feb. 20, a second set of radiographs showed that the hip remained in place.

"The implants remained in identical position and showed no loosening," Roush said. "In addition, Shiloh's baby is doing well."

COURTESY KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

COURTESY KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

COURTESY MIAMI VETERINARY SPECIALISTS