Grace: A Cat With A Broken Mouth

By Patricia Jordan, DVM

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Grace is a three-year-old, male domestic shorthair cat who weighs 9 lbs. A car had hit him three days earlier. Twenty-four hours after the accident, the cat was found dragging himself back home, limping on the right front and with his right front eye hanging out. He also had sustained major palate, mandible, and oral mucosal trauma. At that time, 24 hours after the injury, Grace was taken to an emergency veterinarian who gave him steroids, antibiotics, and general anesthesia. Grace’s right eye was enucleated and his jaw wired. Interestingly enough, however, no pain medications, radiographs or fluid treatment was performed. He subsequently suffered from sweeney, resulting in knuckling over at the right wrist. The emergency vet had advised taking Grace directly to the North Carolina Veterinary School for major hard palate reconstruction and to work up the right front leg lameness.

Upon presentation to our clinic, Grace was in lateral recumbency. He was exhausted, had blood loss, tooth injuries, torn tissue with jagged edges, excessive pain, and was palpably cold in his paws. He was 12% dehydrated and appeared too painful to move. His presenting shock-like condition was treated with a warming blanket and fluid administration. A general cleanup had to be done to remove all the blood from his coat and the sloughing tissue from his oral cavity.

Grace’s palate tissue was ischemic and bruised and his oral cavity looked cadaverous, with a fracture of the hard palate along the symphysis, and his lower mandible split down the symphysis. At the emergency clinic, huge doses of what I would consider inappropriate steroids (dexamethasone) had been given to the traumatized patient well past the 24-hour mark of the original injury. This inappropriate medicating was the reason for the tissue ischemia and poor condition of the oral cavity following the blunt trauma of the accident.

The following characteristic symptoms were considered the main reasons to seek homeopathic care:

- head/brain/nerve—trauma
- eye/nerve tissue—surgical wounding
- tissue—ischemia, torn and sloughing

The following three remedies were considered, using the Concordant Materia Medica of Frans Vermulen [Haarlem, The Netherlands: Emyriss Publishers; 1997]: Hypericum, arnica, and calendula. Calendula was selected for the following reasons:

- The remedy is a most remarkable healing agent.
- It promotes healthy granulation and rapid healing by first intention.
- It has specific actions upon mucous membranes.
- For exhaustion from loss of blood and excessive pain.
- It is valuable in healing and reproducing bone, after mechanical injuries.
- For brain concussions and skull fractures.
- To prevent suppuration.
- For injuries to the eye.
- After operations of the throat, to prevent esophagitis.

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For the lower point of the scapula and sensation as though everything is bruised.

For cold hands, and pain at the occiput.

Calendula 30C was given by crushing a pellet in spring water and administering by glass dropper. This remedy was given at this dose three times, half an hour apart, for the reason that the condition of the vital force in this patient was unclear. Grace showed progressive improvement following the administration of the calendula.

His first response was an attempt to lick and move his very swollen tongue. The patient also started to acknowledge our attending to him, whereas previously he was non-responsive, as if in shock.

Within four days, for which he stayed hospitalized at our clinic with only nursing care, Grace was eating and drinking by himself. The patient not only recovered the split palate and the oral mucosa, but the wire (applied too tightly) was able to be completely removed 10 days following his visit to us. The wired jaw had been misaligned, and, since the brokenness of the entire skull was advancing toward stabilization so rapidly, we thought it best to remove the wire.

All oral tissues repaired without further surgical intervention, no debridement, no suturing! All fractures were confirmed healed radiographically. Massage therapy was instituted to help resolve stagnation in the tissues and reestablish tissue perfusion and nerve stimulation.

This patient never needed palate reconstruction. The pain was responsive to the remedy, and even the tissue, the fractures, and the brachial plexus injury were resolved. The eye socket stayed clean following a very dirty surgical enucleation. In the course of six weeks, no one would have believed this patient had been so broken and torn.

Dr. Jordan graduated from the University of North Carolina College of Veterinary Medicine in 1986. She took the Professional Course in Veterinary Homeopathy in 2003 and is taking the Advanced Course. She has originated more than six veterinary facilities, including a totally naturopathic veterinary facility in North Carolina. Dr. Jordan is collaborating currently with other professionals to document vaccine damage in both animals and people.

By Martha Lindsay, DVM, CVH

This patient showed a gradual and beautiful response to 30C calendula. All of us have seen animals in rough shape like this, shocky and dehydrated and in pain. My heart and mind are totally involved just reading the intake description of this kitty. There is not much to say to the result except Yeay! for homeopathy in the hands of Dr. Jordan.

As you might imagine would happen in this journal, we just had to come up with a take-home message from this great case. One very important point is made repeatedly during our homeopathic educational careers: That we must study the materia medica.

To illustrate this point, let us choose some symptoms given in Grace's case description: Cold body and paws, eye trauma, shock, fluid loss, exhaustion, wounds not healing, wounds suppurating/infected, bone trauma and fractures, tissue sloughing, and neurological symptoms of the front limb.

If we had chosen the following rubrics to describe these symptoms, we would not have found calendula and would not have been reading materia medica for this cat:

- Extremities, coldness
- Generals, coldness of affected parts
- Generals, shock
- Generals, loss, blood of
- Generals, injuries (Kent)
- Eye, injuries, from
- Generals, wounds, heal, slow to
- Generals, wounds, reaction without
- Generals, wounds, dissecting
- Extremities, paralysis
- Generals, paralysis

If, however, we had used the following rubrics, we would have included calendula in our potential remedy list:

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Generals, shock, injury from
Generals, wounds
Generals, wounds, constitutional effect of
Generals, wounds, cuts
Generals, wounds, gangrene of
Generals, wounds, granulation, proud flesh
Generals, wounds, scuffiness
Generals, wounds, soft tissue, with torn
Generals, wounds, suppuration
Generals, inflammation, wounds of
Generals, lacerations
Generals, injuries [Schroyens]
Generals, injuries, concussion
Generals, injuries, bones, fractures of
Generals, injuries, bones, fractures, compound fractures
Generals, injuries, operation, ailments from
Generals, injuries, rupture of blood vessel, muscles of
Generals, injuries, bones, fractures of, slow repair of broken
bones
Generals, injuries, tendons of

We can see that finding calendula as a remedy contender depends upon which rubrics we select. And on which repertory (ies) we choose. To compound the problem, we find that a good number of the applicable rubrics contain many remedies in addition to calendula, and that some of the rubrics containing calendula are small and might be dismissed due to size of the rubric. Computer programs such as MacRepertory and Radar certainly can speed up multiple analyses of various rubric selections, but in the face of an acute situation, it is difficult in a busy practice to take the time to read through all the *materia medica* for many remedies. So it is very helpful to have already studied remedies that are useful for the acute conditions we find commonly in veterinary practice. Then we can refer to a list of the most applicable remedies for quick reference.

I appreciate this case submission for many reasons: It helps all of us feel good that we practice homeopathy, it illustrates a great case for calendula, and it helps us remember the importance of *materia medica* study. Thanks so much! [For further details of this wonderful remedy, see the Spring 2005 issue. Ed.]

References

MacRepertory [San Rafael, CA: Kent Homeopathic Associates].

Radar [Brussels, Belgium: Archibald].


Dr. Lindsay was a conventional general practitioner and lecturer for 20 years. During the ensuing three years of conventional behavior medicine practice, she started studying homeopathy and became certified in 2006. She has a husband of 28 years, two grown daughters, two dogs, and one cat.