Seizures in companion animals

THIS edition of *In Practice* focuses on epileptic seizures in dogs and cats, and the causes, investigation and management thereof. As will become clear in this set of articles, epileptic seizures represent the most common chronic neurological condition in dogs, but their investigation, management and prevention are complicated by the wide variety of potential different causes.

As veterinary surgeons, the current declaration upon becoming members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons states: ‘...that, above all, my constant endeavour will be to ensure the health and welfare of animals committed to my care.’ The primary aim for us as veterinary surgeons in the management of dogs and cats with epileptic seizures should therefore be to ensure the highest quality of life of our patients. However, this requires that we are able to provide an accurate prognosis to the owner, understand the potential underlying causes of seizures, are able to design an appropriate investigative plan and, most importantly, can tailor the treatment plan in order to provide the greatest benefit to the animal in terms of health and welfare. Specifically tailoring the treatment
plan allows us to optimise the seizure control, while minimising adverse antiepileptic drug effects in an individual patient. In some patients, by placing the emphasis on quality of life rather than purely on seizure control, the negative effects of treatment may even outweigh the benefits.

These well-researched articles by leaders within the field of clinical veterinary neurology provide an overview of the current understanding of the processes whereby seizures develop and the risk factors for this (epileptogenesis), suggest how to plan your investigation in a patient with epileptic seizures, how to approach the dog with idiopathic epilepsy (one of the major causes of seizures in dogs), give a more detailed discussion of brain tumours and a description of what is different in juvenile animals with seizures.

Jacques Penderis
Vet-Extra Neurology, Broadleys Veterinary Hospital, Craig Leith Road, Stirling FK7 7LE, UK
e-mail: jacques.penderis@vet-neurology.co.uk
doi:10.1136/inp.g5118