

# **RADIOGRAPHY – A SIMPLE DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR THE FIELD VET**

**Deepu Philip Mathew  
R. Chitra**

## **Introduction:**

The majority of field vets have come across various cases, the diagnosis of which could have been confirmed using radiography. Confirmation of provisional diagnosis can be done by this simple tool. Though many of us don't try this aspect, once you start using it as an aid in your diagnosis you will understand that, it is really an indispensable tool in our diagnostic armor.

## **My personal experiences:**

After my post graduation in Surgery, I was presented with a case of suspected fracture which could not be fully ascertained by physical examination alone. I approached several human hospitals near by Chengannur but they refused to have a dog radiographed. I then approached a private X-ray lab the owner of which showed enthusiasm in this matter. He requested my help for positioning the animal. There after they have taken a large number of radiographs of dogs and cats. These days our presence is needed only in cases which need sedation for control, special positioning and contrast radiography. We could diagnose and confirm cases like Bone tumors, Foreign bodies of the GI tract, Uroliths, Pyometra, Marie's disease, Esophageal dilatations and strictures and fractures of various bones including spines.

Another important aspect is in pregnancy diagnosis of bitches (above 45 days of gestation) where in you don't have the luxury of an Ultra sound scanner. We mostly use it to diagnose whether the bitch has finished whelping or not especially in heavy bodied bitches. In one case a Great Dane which had whelped 9 puppies following which there was an unusually long delay was found to have another 3 more to deliver. Contrast radiography using Barium meal was used to diagnose esophageal dilatations, strictures etc, the presenting complaint being persistent regurgitation over a period of time. We thankfully acknowledge the help provided

by our teachers in the Department of Surgery, COVAS, Mannuthy in giving a correct diagnosis in doubtful cases.

## **The positive aspects:**

As was mentioned earlier, in many cases we could pinpoint the lesions, arrive at a correct diagnosis, initiate appropriate treatment and give a correct prognosis. The patient and client were greatly benefited in most cases. Many cases have been referred from distant places and in most cases a correct diagnosis and advice could be given. The client greatly appreciates this diagnostic tool, who in most occasions is ignorant to the fact that diagnostic tools other than a stethoscope / thermometer / microscope exists in Veterinary practice. Our value as well as the professions is bound to improve by leaps and bounds where the good client always appreciates our effort.

## **Limitations:**

Most of our institutions do not have facilities for radiography. I feel all District Veterinary Center's and Veterinary Poly Clinic's should be provided with radio diagnostic facility and requisite staff posted in at least few centers in a district whose service can be obtained by others also. This could be a bit unrealistic at least in the near future and so tie ups with local radiographers will help us in a long way. Cost factor is not a big issue as far as small animal owners are concerned. The unit in Chengannur charges only the normal rates as for a human case. All the field veterinarians should be given refresher trainings regarding the basics of radio diagnosis so as to enable them to use this technique in a confident manner.

## **Conclusion:**

Radiography is a simple, cost effective, diagnostic tool which each and every vet should have in his armory to diagnose various conditions especially in the case of pet animals.

