pubvet
MEDICINA VETERINÁRIA E ZOOTECNIA
ISSN 1982-1263
https://doi.org/10.31533/pubvet.v19n02e1732

Homeopathic treatment of a canine abscess: Case report

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Abstract. Salivary gland abscesses in dogs are relatively common and often result from bacterial infections secondary to trauma or insect bites. Conventional treatment typically involves antibiotics and surgical drainage, which can be quite invasive and are often associated with frequent recurrence. However, there is growing interest in integrative therapies, including homeopathy, as less invasive approaches aiming to achieve definitive remission of clinical signs and reduce recurrence in specific cases. This study evaluated the effect of a homeopathic protocol, including Hepar sulphur and Silicea, on a dog diagnosed with a salivary gland abscess. The results demonstrated a significant reduction in lesion size and pain, with no notable adverse effects, suggesting that homeopathy may serve as an effective alternative or complement to conventional treatment.

Keywords: Abscess, dog, homeopathy, hepar sulfur, silicea

Tratamento homeopático de abscesso em cão: Relato de caso

Resumo. Os abscessos das glândulas salivares em cães são relativamente comuns e, geralmente, resultam de infecções bacterianas secundárias, traumas ou picadas de insetos. O tratamento convencional normalmente envolve antibióticos e drenagem cirúrgica, que podem ser bastante invasivos e estão, frequentemente, associados a recorrências frequentes. No entanto, há um interesse crescente sobre as terapias complementares, incluindo a homeopatia, como uma abordagem menos invasiva que visa alcançar a remissão definitiva dos sinais clínicos e reduzir a taxa de recorrência, em casos específicos. Este estudo avaliou o efeito de um protocolo homeopático, incluindo *Hepar sulphur* e *Silicea*, em um cão com diagnóstico de abscesso na glândula salivar. Os resultados demonstraram uma redução significativa no tamanho da lesão e na dor e desconforto, sem efeitos adversos notáveis, sugerindo que a homeopatia pode servir como uma ferramenta eficaz ou complementar ao tratamento convencional.

Palavras-chave: Abscesso, cão, homeopatia, Hepar sulphur, silicea

Tratamiento homeopático de un absceso canino: Informe de caso

Resumen. Los abscesos de las glándulas salivales en perros son relativamente comunes y a menudo son el resultado de infecciones bacterianas secundarias a traumatismos o picaduras de insectos. El tratamiento convencional generalmente implica antibióticos y drenaje quirúrgico, que pueden ser bastante invasivos y a menudo se asocian con recurrencias frecuentes. Sin embargo, existe un interés creciente en las terapias integrativas, incluida la homeopatía, como un enfoque menos invasivo destinado a lograr la remisión definitiva de los signos clínicos y reducir la recurrencia en casos específicos. Este estudio evaluó el efecto de un protocolo homeopático, que incluía *Hepar sulphur* y *Silicea*, en un perro diagnosticado con un absceso de glándula salival. Los resultados demostraron una reducción significativa en el tamaño de la lesión y el dolor, sin efectos

adversos notables, lo que sugiere que la homeopatía puede servir como una alternativa eficaz o un complemento al tratamiento convencional.

Palabras clave: Absceso, perro, homeopatía, Hepar sulphur, silicea

Introduction

Abscesses are characterized by localized accumulations of pus beneath the skin, often resulting from bacterial infections secondary to trauma, among other causes (Luquetti et al., 2024; Paula Júnior et al., 2018). Conventional treatment typically involves abscess drainage and the administration of antibiotics to control infection (Pereira et al., 2015; Sciarri & Maurizio, 2012). However, the increasing prevalence of bacterial antibiotic resistance presents a significant challenge in veterinary medicine, driving the exploration of alternative therapeutic approaches. Furthermore, conventional treatments often fail to achieve complete resolution, with recurrences being common (Marques et al., 2023).

Homeopathy, an integrative medical practice grounded in the principle of "like cures like," has been investigated as a potential alternative for managing various inflammatory and infectious conditions in humans and animals (Grams, 2019; Whitmont, 2010). Within this approach, homeopathic medicines such as *Hepar sulfur* and *Silicea* are specifically indicated for the treatment of abscesses due to their draining, anti-inflammatory, and regenerative properties (Iturri, 2009; Tiefenthaler, 1996; Wagenknecht et al., 2023). These remedies may provide a less invasive therapeutic solution with a reduced risk of adverse effects compared to traditional antibiotics (Valle et al., 2023; Valle et al., 2015).

Despite ongoing debates regarding the scientific validity of homeopathy, case reports and some studies suggest that this approach can effectively resolve cutaneous abscesses in animals, promoting drainage and accelerating healing without the common side effects associated with conventional pharmacological treatments (Iturri, 2009; Tiefenthaler, 1996; Wagenknecht et al., 2023). This report aims to document the effectiveness of a homeopathic treatment in managing a refractory salivary gland abscess in a female Dalmatian dog.

Case report

A 15-year-old intact female Dalmatian was presented to NaturalPet Veterinary Clinic with a diagnosed salivary gland abscess and a history of six days of antibiotic and anti-inflammatory treatment, which had failed to improve the condition. On physical examination, the patient showed mild apathy, a temperature of 39.8º C, pain on local palpation, and perilesional edema (Figure A). A subcutaneous and injectable dose of *Apis* D30 was immediately administered, as it was the only available medication. The following home medications were prescribed: (1) *Thuya* 30CH (oral), 3 drops, once daily (SID) for 30 days; (2) *Hepar sulphur* 30CH (oral), 3 drops, SID for 30 days. It was also recommended to complete the prescribed 10-day antibiotic course initiated by the conventional veterinarian.

Figure A. Red arrow indicating the initial lesion (**I**) and (**II**) showing the condition after 10 days of antibiotic therapy combined with anti-inflammatory treatment.

Results

Hepar sulfur and *Thuya* administration began on 27.05 (Figure B – I). Over the next three days, as the antibiotic treatment concluded, the abscess evolved with an increase in local temperature and volume (Figure. B – IV). Despite this, the animal remained in excellent clinical condition - alert, with a good appetite, and without any signs of local pain or discomfort.

Figure B. Demonstrates the progression of the lesion over the following days: **I**. 27.05; **II**. 28.05; **III**. 29.05; **IV**. 30.05 – Red arrows indicate ulcerated points where drainage of serosanguineous content began.

After 15 days of administering the above homeopathic medications and observing a reduction in the lesion's content (Figure C – I, II, III), Silicea 30CH was introduced at 3 drops, SID for 30 days.

Figure C. The red arrows highlight favorable progression, marked by decreased local edema and serosanguineous content. **I**. 02.06; II. 05.06; **III**. 11.06; **IV**. 28.06 - Total healing, approximately 30 days after treatment initiation.

Discussion

The conventional treatment of abscesses, which generally involves surgical drainage and antibiotics, has been widely used due to its effectiveness in controlling bacterial infections and promoting rapid healing (Pereira et al., 2015). However, this approach poses challenges, such as the risk of adverse drug reactions and the growing issue of bacterial resistance, which undermines the efficacy of many antibiotics (Gottardo et al., 2021). These challenges have spurred interest in therapeutic alternatives, such as homeopathy, which offers a less invasive approach with a reduced risk of side effects.

This case report suggests that homeopathic treatment may serve as an effective alternative to antibiotics for managing salivary gland abscesses in dogs, particularly in cases where bacterial resistance is a concern or when anti-inflammatory drugs are contraindicated due to comorbidities. While the total recovery time was slightly longer—approximately one month for complete resolution—the absence of side effects and the owner's reports of the patient's consistent well-being throughout the treatment highlight the advantages of this approach. Furthermore, the gentle and non-aggressive nature of the cure positions homeopathy as a valuable first-line option for such cases. The outcomes of this case align with previous studies demonstrating the efficacy of *Hepar sulfur* and *Silicea* in treating infections in dogs and humans (Whitmont, 2010).

Still, in this study, homeopathic treatment with *Hepar sulfuris* and *Silicea* was comparable to conventional antibiotic therapy. The patient showed a gradual yet consistent reduction in abscess size without any adverse effects, such as the gastrointestinal reactions often observed in dogs treated with conventional medications, corroborating the findings of Miyzawa et al. (2005). These findings suggest that homeopathy may be a safe alternative, particularly in cases where antibiotics are contraindicated or bacterial resistance poses a challenge.

Additionally, homeopathy may offer supplementary benefits through its potential to modulate the immune system. Research indicates that medications such as *Hepar sulfur* and *Silicea* can stimulate the body's natural defense mechanisms, promoting spontaneous abscess drainage and accelerating healing in a less invasive manner (Whitmont, 2010). In this case, *Thuya occidentalis* was also employed as part of the treatment protocol due to its dual action in supporting glandular function and indirectly

stimulating the immune system (Lira et al., 2012; Monteiro & Coelho, 2008; Queiroz et al., 2015). This contributed to the recovery of the affected gland. In contrast, antibiotics typically offer a more direct and rapid effect on bacterial infections but may fail to penetrate encapsulated abscesses, often necessitating surgical drainage, and more invasive procedures (Miyzawa et al., 2005).

Despite its potential benefits, homeopathy continues to face challenges regarding scientific acceptance, as many studies lack robust evidence supporting its efficacy in severe infectious conditions (Ernst, 2002). Nonetheless, the present study demonstrates that in cases of mild to moderate salivary gland abscesses, homeopathy may be a viable treatment option, especially when integrated with other veterinary care strategies.

In conclusion, while conventional antibiotic therapy remains the gold standard for acute bacterial infections, homeopathic treatment can provide a complementary approach that promotes gentle healing with fewer side effects and avoids contributing to antimicrobial resistance when appropriately prescribed and monitored. Further studies are necessary to validate homeopathy's effectiveness in more severe or resistant cases and to explore its potential within integrative therapeutic strategies.

Conclusion

Homeopathic treatment using *Hepar sulfur*, *Thuya*, and *Silicea* proved to be a safe and effective approach for managing a salivary gland abscess in a dog. The reported case demonstrated mild and progressive clinical improvement, with the patient exhibiting no signs of pain, discomfort, or behavioral changes throughout the recovery period. These findings suggest that homeopathy may be a viable alternative to traditional treatments, promoting animal welfare through a minimally invasive approach. However, further studies are necessary to confirm the efficacy of this treatment in more severe cases or different types of infections, thereby expanding its applicability and safety in the veterinary clinical field.

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Histórico do artigo:
Recebido: 25 de dezembro de 2024
Aprovado: 3 de janeiro de 2025