

SMALL MAMMAL EMERGENCIES: FOUNDATIONS AND UPDATES

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Who am I?

- University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign - Vet school
- Milwaukee Emergency Center for Animals – ER-only internship
- Louisiana State University CVM – zoological medicine internship
- University of California-Davis – ACZM-approved residency (zoological companion animal focus)
- VCA South Shore (Weymouth) Animal Hospital



Outline

- Assessing Our Patients
 - Triage
 - Shock
- Managing Our Patients
 - Supportive care
 - Monitoring
 - CPR
- Preparing For Emergencies



ASSESSING OUR PATIENTS: TRIAGE AND SHOCK

TRIAGE

Introduction

- Definition – Process of sorting patients to determine order of treatment
- Done for emergent and routine appointments
- Quick look at major systems
 - Hands off assessment first



Introduction

- Very few carnivores in exotics
 - *Which species of exotic pet mammal is a predator?*
 - Understand the nature of prey species
- HIGHLY stress sensitive – consider sedatives
- Balance critical care with what can be tolerated
- Efficient examinations

History

- Signalment
 - Age
 - Sex – **reproductive status**
 - Species
 - Breed/morph

Species	Lifespan
Rabbit	8-12 y
Chinchilla	15-20 y
Guinea Pig	4-8 y
Ferret	5-8 y
Gerbil	3-4 y
Hamster	1.5-3 y
Rat	1.5-3 y
Mice	1.5-3 y

History (con't.)

- Presenting complaint
- Systems check
- Medical history
- Husbandry – *what does this include??*
 - Diet
 - Housing

Initial PE – Respiratory System

- Respiratory rate and effort
- Auscultation
 - Crackles, wheezes, harsh lung sound
 - Upper airway sounds
 - Lack of sounds
 - Auscultate trachea, larynx, nasal passages





- *What are some abnormalities noted in this rabbit?*

Initial PE – Nervous System

- Mentation
- Motor function
- Reflexes
- Seizures?
- *How would you describe the nervous system of this patient?*

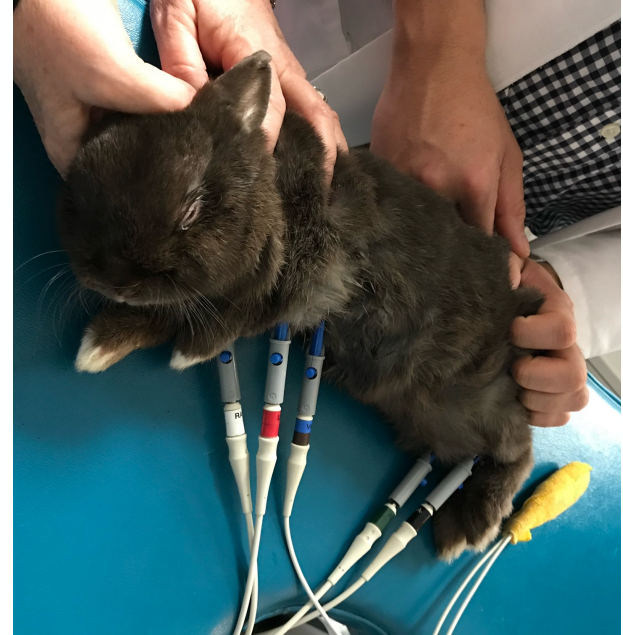
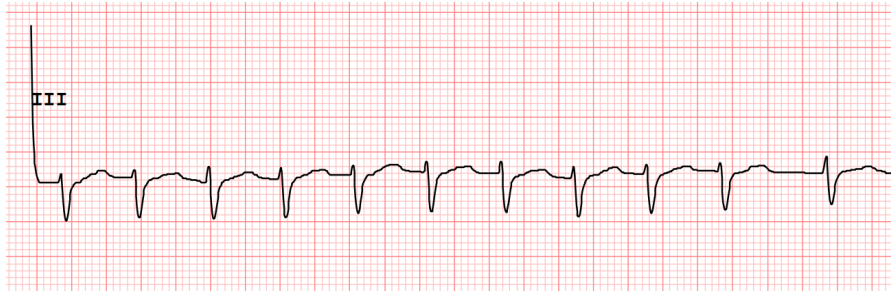


- *How would you describe the nervous system of this patient?*
 - *No sedatives were provided*



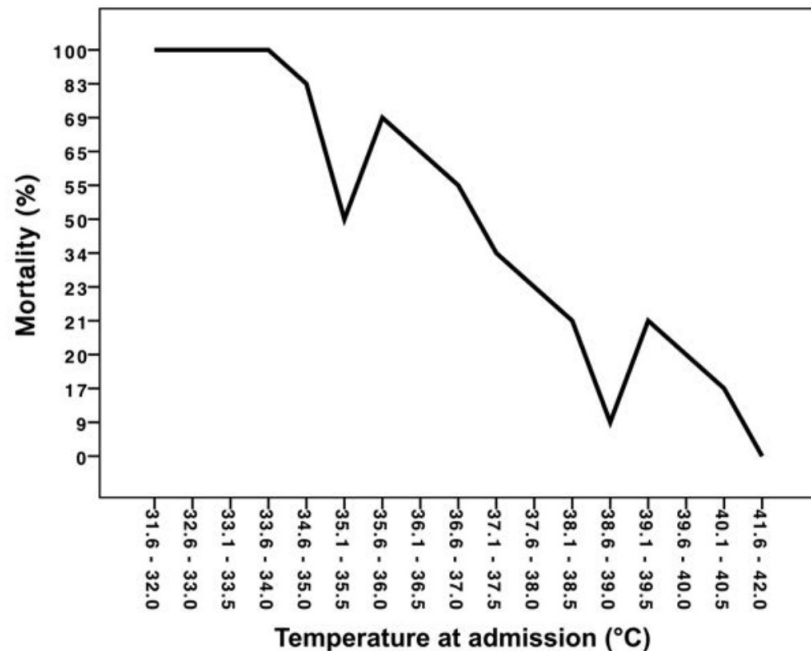
Initial PE – Circulatory System

- Heart rate and rhythm
- Murmur?
- Perfusion
 - Pulse
 - Mucous membranes



Initial PE – Temperature

- Hyperthermia
 - Heat stroke
 - *Which species is especially at risk?*
- Hypothermia
 - Prognosis
 - *Prognostic indicator in which species?*



Di Girolamo et al 2016 JAVMA

Initial PE – Hydration Status

- Skin tent
- Mucous membranes
- Corneal appearance
- Presence of enophthalmia

Percent dehydration	Clinical signs
<5	No detectable abnormalities
5-8	Decreased skin turgor, dry mm
8-10	Decreased skin turgor, dry mm, eyes sunken, slightly prolonged CRT
10-12	Severe skin tenting, prolonged CRT, dry mm, eyes sunken, possible signs of shock
>12	Above plus signs of shock, life threatening

Initial PE – Weight

- Drug calculations
- Body condition score
- Dehydration
- Fluid therapy monitoring



Latter Portions of PE – Abdomen

- Palpation
 - Pain
 - GI tract, liver
 - Urinary tract (kidneys, bladder)
 - Reproductive tract
- Auscultation
 - *What is the medical term for the sounds of the GI tract?*



Joanne Paul-Murphy

Latter Portions of PE – Pain

- Reluctance to move
- Lying stretched out
- Sitting hunched
- Tucked abdominal appearance
- Self-mutilation
- Bruxism and/or vocalization
- Grimace scales available
- Bristol rabbit pain scale



Grimace scales

- *Why is a grimace scale assessment alone insufficient to determine pain?*



[J Am Assoc Lab Anim Sci.](#) 2017 Jul; 56(4): 425–435.

PMCID: PMC5517332

Published online 2017 Jul.

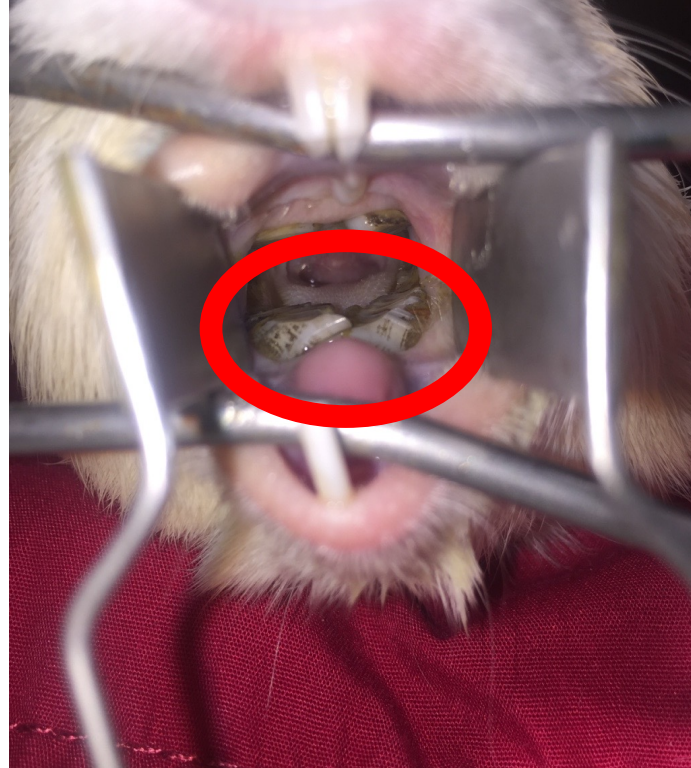
PMID: [28724492](#)

Evaluation of Pain Assessment Techniques and Analgesia Efficacy in a Female Guinea Pig (*Cavia porcellus*) Model of Surgical Pain

[Vanessa L Oliver](#),¹ [Stephanie Athavale](#),¹ [Katherine E Simon](#),¹ [Lon V Kendall](#),² [Jean A Nemzek](#),¹ and [Jennifer L Lofgren](#)^{1,*}

Latter Portions of PE – Oral Exam

- Limited in awake animals
- Malocclusion
- Oral abscesses, ulcerations
- Impacted cheek pouches
- *What is the term describing a particular component of this guinea pig's dental disease?*



THIS ANIMAL WAS ANESTHETIZED DURING THIS PICTURE

SHOCK

Introduction

- Definition: Poor tissue perfusion
- Dehydration vs shock
- Types of shock
 - **Hypovolemic**
 - Absolute → hemorrhage
 - Relative → GI loss, urinary loss, third spacing
 - Obstructive → tamponade, PTE, bloat
 - Cardiogenic
 - Distributive → sepsis, heat stroke, anaphylaxis



Stages of Shock

Stage	Blood loss	Physiology	Signs	Comments
Compensatory	<20%	SNS→ BP increases/ SVR	↑HR, N to ↑BP, bounding pulses, rapid CRT	Not commonly seen
Early Decompensatory	30-40%	Reduced blood flow to non-vital organs	↓ Temp, BP, ↓ or ↑ HR, ↑CRT	MOST COMMON
Decompensatory	>40%	Irreversible organ failure, neuroendocrine response ineffective	↓ Temp, BP, HR, pale/cyanotic mm, renal failure, comatose, arrest	

MANAGING OUR PATIENTS: SUPPORTIVE CARE, MONITORING, CPR

SUPPORTIVE CARE

Oxygen, Heat, Fluids, Pain, Food

1. Oxygen Supplementation

- Indications
 - Primary respiratory disease
 - Stress
 - Cardiovascular disease
- Methods
 - Oxygen cage
 - Face mask
 - Nasal oxygen
 - Intubation and ventilation



2. Thermal Support

- Monitor closely
- Methods
 - Bair Hugger, incubator
 - Fluids
 - Warm water blankets
 - Water bottles/gloves
- Considerations
 - Burn injuries, overheating
 - “Rewarming shock”



3. Fluid Therapy

- Most effective when normothermic
- Risk of fluid overload
- Shock rates
 - Goal = BP > 90 mmHg (systolic)
 - Subtract boluses from daily maintenance and replacement

Species	Maintenance
Rabbits	100-120 ml/kg/d
Ferrets	75-100 ml/kg/d
Guinea pigs	100 ml/kg/d
Other mammals	80-100 ml/kg/d

3. Fluid Therapy – Rehydration

- Rabbit of 3 kg that is 6% dehydrated using 100 ml/kg/d
 - Maintenance = (x ml/kg/d)(BW in kg)
 - (100 ml)(3 kg) = 300 ml/d
 - Deficit = (% dehydration)(BW in g)
 - (0.06)(3000 g) = 180 ml
- Replacement therapy for this example
 - 300 ml + 180 ml = 480 ml
 - Replace over 24 hours = 240 ml SQ q12hr x 2 doses
 - Replace over 24 hours = 20 ml/hr IV
 - Routine pulmonary auscultation

3. Fluid Therapy – Routes

- Intravenous (IV)/intraosseous (IO)
 - Shock, severe dehydration
- Subcutaneous fluids
 - Mild dehydration, stable patients
- Oral fluids
 - Hypernatremia, burns, cardiac disease



3. Fluid Therapy – Isotonic Crystalloids

- Volume replacement, dehydration, maintenance
- 20-40% remains in intravascular space after 30-60 minutes
- Shock rate – 5-10 ml/kg over 15 minutes
 - Repeat up to 4 times total
- LRS, 0.9% NaCl, Normosol-R, Plasmalyte



3. Fluid Therapy – Hypertonic Crystalloids

- Hyperosmolarity → rapid intravascular volume expansion
- Cerebral edema, volume expansion
- Risks
 - Caution in dehydrated animals
 - Hypernatremia
- Shock rate – 3-5 ml/kg over 15 minutes
- 7.5-10% NaCl



3. Fluid Therapy – Colloids

- High oncotic pressure holds fluid in the vascular space
- Risks
 - Coagulopathies
 - Renal failure in septic patients
- Dose
 - 10-20 ml/kg/d
 - Shock rate – 3-5 ml/kg over 15 minutes
- *What are some examples?*



3. Fluid Therapy – Blood Transfusion

- Suboptimal first resuscitation fluid
- Indications
 - >20-30% blood volume loss
 - Ongoing hemorrhage
 - PCV < 20%
 - Poor response to other fluids
 - Coagulopathies
- Rate – 0.5 ml/kg for the first 20 minutes, then 10-20 ml/kg IV up to 4 hours



3. Fluid Therapy – Blood Transfusion

- Perform cross match
 - *Which species can forego an initial cross-match in truly emergent situations?*
- Collect blood, replace fluid, use anti-coagulant preservative
- Monitor for reactions
 - Acute hemolytic
 - Febrile non-hemolytic
- Recheck PCV/TS

3. Blood Transfusion QUIZ!

- *What drug causes a time-dependent decrease in PCV/TS in ferrets, and therefore should be avoided for donor blood collection?*
 - Isoflurane
- *What is the amount of blood that can be safely collected from the donor?*
 - 1% of the body weight in grams (1 ml per 100 grams)
- *What is the most common anti-coagulant used in dog and cat blood transfusion medicine (abbreviation is ok)?*
 - CPDA (citrate-phosphate-dextrose-adenine)
- *What are some clinical signs of a transfusion reaction?*
 - Injected or pale mucous membranes, \uparrow TPR, CRT < 1 sec, red/brown urine, agitated/comatose/lethargic mentation

4. Analgesia – Intro and Sedation

- Benzodiazepines
 - Reversible, NOT analgesic
 - Sedative, anxiolytic, amnesic
- Opioids
 - Reversible, **analgesic**
- Other analgesics
 - Lidocaine
 - NSAIDs?



JAVMA



Lidocaine constant rate infusion improves the probability of survival in rabbits with gastrointestinal obstructions: 64 cases (2012–2021)

Gail L. Huckins, DVM, DACZM^{1,2*}; Chelsey Tournade, DVM¹; Courtney Patson, DVM^{1,3};
Kurt K. Sladky, MS, DVM, DACZM, DECCM¹

4. Analgesia – Maropitant?

> Am J Vet Res. 2019 Oct;80(10):963–968. doi: 10.2460/ajvr.80.10.963.

Pharmacokinetics of maropitant citrate in New Zealand White rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)

Sarah M Ozawa, Michelle G Hawkins, Tracy L Drazenovich, Philip H Kass, Heather K Knych



Journal of Exotic Pet Medicine

Volume 47, October 2023, Pages 14-20



Research

Use of maropitant for pain management in domestic rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) undergoing elective orchiectomy or ovari hysterectomy

Megan Roeder ^{a 1}, Pedro Boscan ^b, Sangeeta Rao ^b, Laila Proença ^{c 2}, William Guerrero ^{d 3}, Maya Grayck ^e, Megan Gish ^e, Michelle N. Sullivan ^f, Miranda J. Sadar ^b  





Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia

Volume 46, Issue 4, July 2019, Pages 476-482



RESEARCH PAPER

Evaluation of analgesic interaction between morphine, dexmedetomidine and maropitant using hot-plate and tail-flick tests in rats

Sandeep Raj Karna  , Kavitha Kongara, Preet Mohinder Singh, Paul Chambers, Nicolas Lopez-Villalobos



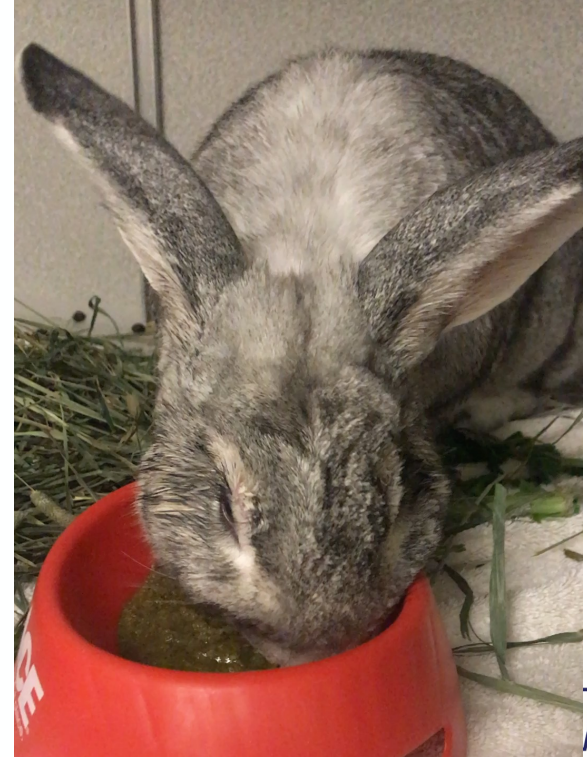
5. Nutrition – Basics

- Negative effects of anorexia
 - Compromise of gastric mucosa
 - Hepatic lipidosis as soon as 48 hours in chinchillas
 - Leads to GI ileus
- Euhydrated, euthermic
- Slow return to diet with anorexia
 - Refeeding syndrome?
 - Divided feedings



5. Nutrition – Metabolic Requirements

- $RER = 70 \times (\text{body weight in kg})^{0.75}$
- $MER = \text{Energy factor} \times RER$
- Energy factor
 - Starvation: 0.5-0.8
 - Trauma: 1-2
 - Sepsis: 1.2-1.5
 - Growth: 1.5-3



5. Nutrition – Diets

- Commercial powdered diets
- Herbivores – indigestible long fibers
- Ferrets (carnivore) – high protein and calorie-dense foods

Table 2

Nutritional requirement for adult rabbits and comparison between analytical constituents of rabbit prescription diets

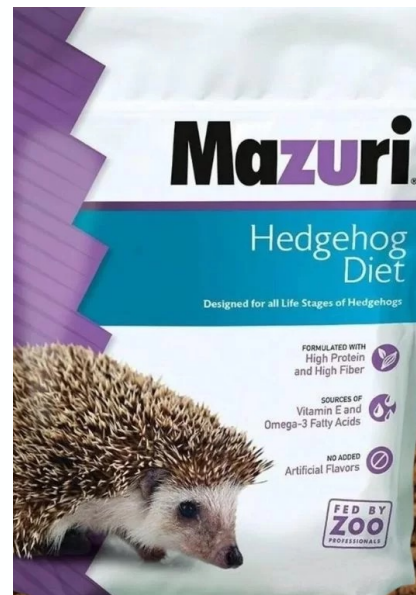
Diet/Requirement	Protein (%)	Fat (%)	Crude Fiber (%)	Indigestible Fiber (%)	Energy	Crude Ash (%)
Requirement for adult rabbit	12–16	2.5–4	13–20	>12.5	NP	NP
Emeraid Herbivore	19	9.5	32	NP	1.2 kcal/g dry weight	—
Critical Care	16	3	21–26	NP	24 kcal/tbsp (9 g)	10
Critical Care Fine Grind	16	3	21–26	NP	24 kcal/tbsp	10

Proenca and Mayer, VCNA Exot Anim Pract, 2014. 17(3):485-502



5. Nutrition – Diets

- What about hedgehogs, rats, and sugar gliders?*





- *What is this sugar glider eating?*

5. Nutrition – Routes

- Syringe feeding
 - 1 ml syringe in the interdental space
 - *Which animals have this space?*
 - Divided into 2-4 feedings
- Nasogastric tube
 - Short durations
 - Liquid diet, CRI or bolus feeding
- Esophagostomy tube
 - Weeks to months
 - Thicker diets, complications



Additional Supportive Care

Antibiotics

- Septic shock or translocation
- **Stop using enrofloxacin**
- Routes – IV, PO, SQ
- *What antibiotics should be avoided in rabbits, guinea pigs, and chinchillas?*

Steroids?

- Immunosuppression
- Not recommended
- **EXCEPTION**
 - *Ferrets → what disease that is a common reason for emergency presentation? Most common clinical sign?*

MONITORING

Lactate and Glucose

- Lactate
 - Increases with poor tissue perfusion
 - D- and L-lactate
 - Rabbits – prognosis (hypolactatemia)
- Glucose
 - Rabbits – prognosis, GI obstruction (hyperglycemia)
 - Ferrets – hypoglycemia
 - Laboratory analyzer more accurate
 - Portable devices → AlphaTrak Canine (ferret), AccuCheck Aviva for humans (rabbit)



Blood Gas Analysis and Pulse Oximetry

- Blood gas analysis
 - Acidemia common
 - Electrolyte disturbances
 - Hyponatremia, ↑ BUN in rabbits
 - *Which species can vomit?*



- Pulse oximeter
 - Goal >96%
 - Vetcorder
 - Locations same as cats/dogs

Hyperglycemia and Hyponatremia

Vet Record

Original research |  Full Access

Clinicopathological and radiographic indicators for orogastric decompression in rabbits presenting with intestinal obstruction at a referral hospital (2015–2018)

Amanda C. Steinagel  Barbara L. Oglesbee

First published: 11 December 2022 | <https://doi.org/10.1002/vetr.2481>

Blood Pressure and Urinalysis

- Blood pressure
 - Arterial > indirect
 - Doppler and oscillometric
 - Front limb > hindlimb
 - **Monitor TRENDS**
- Urinalysis
 - pH, ketones



CPR

Recognition of Arrest

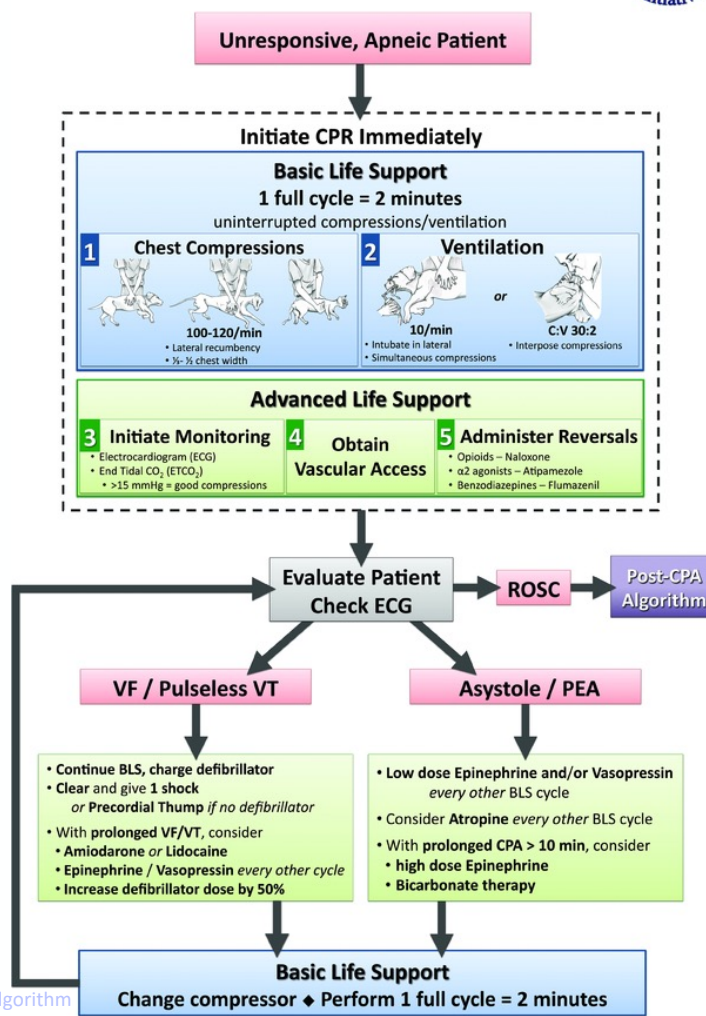
- Cardiac vs respiratory arrest
 - Respiratory arrest generally occurs first
 - *What if they're anesthetized?*
- Signs
 - Apnea
 - Unconsciousness or shift in mentation
 - Poor or dropped pulses
 - Pale to cyanotic mm




Basic Principles

- **Communication is CRITICAL**
- Identify a leader
- Roles
 - Obtain airway and ventilate
 - Catheter
 - Chest compressions
 - Attach monitoring
 - Record and time
 - Draw up medications
 - Inform owner

CPR Algorithm



Use RECOVER to Record CPR Efforts

Standard Reporting of Small Animal Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation																																																																																																																																																																																					
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A = Airway

- Often difficult in small mammals
- Ferrets, hedgehogs = small cats
- Rabbits/guinea pig/chinchilla
 - Lidocaine
 - Laryngoscope to visualize
 - Stylet
 - Endoscope
 - Blind?
- *What is name of the structure in the mouth of this guinea pig? What other species also has this?*



Can't Intubate?

- Tight fitting mask
 - Can be effective → gastric tympany
- Supraglottic airway tube
- Tracheostomy



Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia

Volume 48, Issue 4, July 2021, Pages 517-523



RESEARCH PAPER

Evaluation of supraglottic airway device use during inhalation anesthesia in healthy African pygmy hedgehogs (*Atelerix albiventris*)

Gail L. Huckins, Grayson A. Doss  , Tatiana H. Ferreira

B = Breathing

- 20-30 breaths/min
- Hyperventilation
 - Decreases preload, cardiac output, coronary artery perfusion pressure
- Positive pressure ventilation
 - Lower pressure tolerated (<15 cm H₂O)
- ETCO₂
 - <10 mmHg associated with poor prognosis
 - >15-20 mmHg = goal

C = Circulation/Compression

- Cardiac pump theory
- Dorsal or lateral recumbency
- Chest compressions
 - 100-130/min
 - 25-33% compression
 - 1:1 compression/relaxation
 - Location of the heart may be species-dependent
 - *Which species has a very caudally located heart?*

D = Drugs

- Epinephrine
- Reversals
- Anticholinergics
 - Atropine
 - *Questionable in which species? Why?*
 - Glycopyrrolate
- Vasopressors
 - Vasopressin
 - Norepinephrine CRI



Vascular Access

- Intravenous
 - Cephalic vein
 - Lateral saphenous vein
 - Rabbits – marginal ear vein
 - Rats – lateral or ventral tail
- Intraosseous
 - Tibial crest
 - Femoral trochanteric fossa
- Intratracheal if no vascular access



Efficacy of CPR

- Monitor ETCO₂
- Blood gas
 - Venous blood = oxygenation of peripheral tissues
- Regaining consciousness
 - Lack of immediate return ≠ neurologic impairment
 - Coma > 4 hours = **grave prognosis**
- Brainstem reflexes important
 - PLR absent > 1 day = **grave prognosis**
- Training and practice is crucial

Prognosis of CPR in Exotic Mammals





Journal of Exotic Pet Medicine

Volume 20, Issue 1, January 2011, Pages 46-50



AEMV forum

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation in Hospitalized Rabbits: 15 cases

Gareth J. Buckley MA, VetMB, MRCVS  , Julie DeCubellis MS, DVM,
Claire R. Sharp BSc, BVMS (Hons), Elizabeth A. Rozanski DVM, Dip. ACVECC, Dip. ACVIM (SA-IM)

- ROSC 7/15
 - 5 with face-mask
 - 5 long-medium term survival
- Prognosis similar to cats/dogs

The Journal of
**Veterinary
Medical
Science**

NOTE

Surgery

Retrospective investigation of cardiopulmonary resuscitation outcome in 146 exotic animals

Mamoru ONUMA^{1, 2)}, Hirotaka KONDO³⁾, Sadaharu ONO¹⁾,
Akiyoshi MURAKAMI¹⁾, Tomoko HARADA¹⁾ and Tadashi SANO^{4)*}

- Rabbit 15%
- Hamster, ferret 0%
- Other mammals 14.3%
- Discharge rate 1.2%



Important Exotic Note

- You can be doing everything correctly for CPR in an exotic
- The odds are good they are going to die anyways
- **HOWEVER ...**
 - **Our CPR efforts will be in vain if we do not provide thermal support during CPR**

PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES

Equipment

- Crash cart
 - Syringes, needles, emergency drugs
 - Laryngoscope, ties
 - Ambu bag
 - ET tubes, v-gel
- Oxygen source
- IV catheter supplies, flush (**NO HEPARIN**)
- ECG, ETCO2, SPO2, Doppler
- Heat support
- Fluids, syringe pumps
- Red rubber catheters, polypropylene catheters



Cheat Sheets

- Have drug sheets available
 - Common calculations
 - Reversals
- Code status of the patient
 - get from owner immediately
- Sheets with normal parameters
 - Average weight
 - Heart rate
 - Respiratory rate
 - Rectal temperature
 - Shock fluid volumes

Species	Avg Wt	Temp	HR	RR
Chinchilla	500-800g	94.8-100.2	200-240	40-80
Guinea pig	700-1000g	99.5-103.1	230-380	40-120
Hamster (golden)	80-150g	98.6-102.2	200-500	90-120
Rat	350-500g	98.6-103.1	250-450	70-120
Rabbit	1.5-6kg	100-104	130-325	30-60

Species	LAGO	Animal Name	Scoopers		2.000	kg	
		VMTH#					
Atropine 0.1-0.5mg/kg							
Concentration	0.4	mg/ml		0.4000	mg	1.000	ml
Dose	0.2	mg/kg	SC				
Epinephrine 0.01-0.02mg/kg IV, IT							
Concentration	1	mg/ml		0.0200	mg	0.020	ml
Dose	0.01	mg/kg	SC,IM,IV				
	Dopram	2-5 mg/kg SC, IV					
Concentration	20	mg/ml		10.0000	mg	0.500	ml
Dose	5	mg/kg	SC,IM				
	Glycopyrolate	0.01-0.02mg/kg				PREMED	
Concentration	0.2	mg/ml		0.0200	mg	0.100	ml
Dose	0.01	mg/kg	SC				
	Midazolam	0.5-2.0 mg/kg IM, IV, IP				PREMED	
Concentration	5	mg/ml		1.6000	mg	0.320	ml
Dose	0.8	mg/kg					
	Butorphanol	0.1-0.5 mg/kg SC, IM, IV					
Concentration	10	mg/ml		1.6000	mg	0.160	ml
Dose	0.8	mg/kg					
	Buprenorphine	0.01-0.05 mg/kg SC, IP, IV					
Concentration	0.3	mg/ml		0.0600	mg	0.200	ml
Dose	0.03	mg/kg					
	Oxymorphone						
Concentration	1	mg/ml		0.2000	mg	0.200	ml
Dose	0.1	mg/kg					

QUESTIONS?

kyraberger@capecodvetspecialists.com

Dr. Berg's
babies :)



NOTICE

CE credit certificates & presentation slides will be emailed to you. If you do not receive an email with this information within a week, contact Nichole - *nicholemanfredi@capecodvetspecialists.com*

