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Dystocia due to mummified triplet fetuses in a non-descript goat

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Abstract

A three years old primiparous full term pregnant non-descript doe was brought with the history of restlessness, inappetence, serosanguinous vaginal discharge and intermittent straining for the past 24 hours. Per-vaginal examination revealed that the cervix was fully dilated and hard mass of fetus with empty orbit was palpated in the birth canal. Thus, the case was diagnosed as fetal mummification. Following removal of mummified fetus, another two mummified fetuses were removed by manual traction. The three mummified fetuses were at different stages of development. After removal of the fetuses, the doe was treated with antibiotic, anti-inflammatory, oral ecobolics and supportive therapy for five days. The animal had an uneventful recovery.

Keywords: Mummification, triplet fetuses, goat

Introduction

Mummification occurs after the death of fetus when mechanism of parturition or abortion fails. Fetal fluids are absorbed, uterus contracts and severe distortion of the fetus occurs (Long, 2001) ^[1]. Fetal mummification is observed frequently in sows, occasionally in bitches and queens and uncommonly in ewes, does, cows and mares (Roberts, 1971) ^[2]. In does and ewes, fetal mummification may be seen with twins and/or triplets when one of the embryos has died. Mummification of all the three fetuses is very rarely reported (Rautela *et al.* 2018) ^[3]. The present paper reports mummification of triplet fetuses in a non-descript goat.

Case history and clinical observation

A three years old primiparous full term pregnant non-descript doe with the history of restlessness, inappetence, serosanguinous vaginal discharge and intermittent straining for the past 24 hours was presented to Veterinary Clinical Complex, Veterinary College and Research Institute, Salem. Clinical examination revealed normal rectal temperature with increased respiratory and heart rates. Vaginal examination revealed that the cervix was fully dilated and hard mass of fetus with empty orbit was palpated in the birth canal. Thus, the case was diagnosed as fetal mummification.

Treatment and discussion

After lubrication of birth canal with carboxy methyl cellulose, mummified fetus was removed by manual traction using eye hook. Further vaginal examination revealed presence of two more mummified fetuses which were removed by simple traction. The fetuses were brown in colour and eye balls were empty. The mummified fetuses were at different stages of development (Fig.1). The crown rump length of the fetuses was 16 cm, 9 cm and 8 cm respectively. The fetal membranes were shriveled and dried. After removal of the fetuses, the doe was treated with Enrofloxacin @ 5mg/Kg b.wt i/m, Meloxicam @ 0.2 mg/Kg b.wt i/m and Oxytocin @ 10 IU i/m. Antibiotic, anti-inflammatory, oral ecobolics and supportive therapy were continued for five days. The animal had an uneventful recovery.

Fetal mummification is characterized by fetal death, failure of abortion, resorption of placental fluids, dehydration of the fetus and its membranes, and involution of uterus (Long, 2001) ^[1]. In

does, fetal mummification is uncommon but it has occurred affecting one of twin fetuses in Chlamydiosis, in Toxoplasmosis, in Border Disease and possibly in Coxiella infection (Roberts, 1971) ^[2]. Mummification may also be caused by interference with the fetal blood supply, deficiency in placentation, anomalies in the umbilical cord of the fetus and genetic factors (Jainudeen, 1992) ^[4].



Fig 1: Mummified triplet fetuses

Mummification of one or two fetuses in twins, triplets and quadruplets has been reported by many workers in does (Martha *et al.* 2017; Bisla *et al.* 2019; Vinayak *et al.* 2020; Arun *et al.* 2023 and Alagar *et al.* 2024) ^[5, 6, 7, 8, 9]. However, in the present report, all the three fetuses were mummified. Similarly, Rautela *et al.* (2018) ^[3] also reported mummification of triplet fetuses in a non-descript doe. The correct etiology of fetal death and mummification in the present case could not be specifically diagnosed. Mummification of all the three fetuses might be due to uterine overcrowding and placental insufficiency. If twinning or triplet does occur, one of the fetuses usually develops more slowly than the other and is smaller. The small fetus usually dies, and if the other fetus survives and the pregnancy is maintained, the dead fetus will mummify and be delivered at term (Long, 2001) ^[1]. However, in the present case, all the fetuses were mummified and present at different stages of development.

Occasionally, mummified fetuses are expelled spontaneously, but in most cases they are carried many months beyond gestation period (Jainudeen, 1992) ^[4]. PGF_{2α} has been found very effective in causing expulsion of mummified fetus if there is persistent corpus luteum and closed cervix (Thangamani, 2023) ^[10]. In the present case, cervix was fully dilated and mummified triplet fetuses were delivered by simple traction after lubrication. The prognosis for further breeding is good since there has been no intrinsic damage to the reproductive tract. The present case reports a rare case of mummified triplet fetuses in a non-descript goat.

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