

ALICAM and Gastrointestinal Disease in Dogs

Part A: Utility of ALICAM in the Identification and Localization of Gastrointestinal Bleeding in Dogs

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Identifying the presence and source of gastrointestinal bleeding (GIB) in dogs can be problematic, but it is essential in selecting an appropriate therapy. This retrospective study assessed the ability of ALICAM, an ingestible capsule imaging system, to identify the presence of GIB, determine its location and characterize underlying lesions.

Twelve dogs were administered ALICAM for overt GIB, unexplained anemia and/or microcytosis. A board-certified internist evaluated the studies for the presence of intraluminal blood and the ability of the study to localize the source of bleeding and characterize underlying lesions.

Eleven of 12 (92%) dogs were anemic (5 regenerative, 6 nonregenerative). Three of 12 (25%) dogs had a microcytosis. Eight of 12 (67%) dogs had overt GIB (hematemesis, melena and/or hematochezia). Eight of 12 (67%) dogs had received glucocorticoids or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories in the preceding month. The gastrointestinal tract was sonographically normal in 6 of 6 (100%) dogs. ALICAM identified intraluminal blood in 12/12 (100%) examinations. The study identified the location of bleeding in 12/12 (100%) dogs. Three dogs had multiple sources (gastric polyp with gastric erosions, small intestinal nodules with colonic erosions, gastric erosions with colonic mass). One dog had a solitary jejunal mass. Six dogs had gastric or small intestinal erosions or ulcers. Underlying lesions were not visualized in two cases, likely due to overlying hematomas.

ALICAM is useful in detecting GIB in dogs and identifying the location and type of lesion responsible. Its role in the work up of anemia and the treatment of GIB warrants further investigation.

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