Case Report

SUCCESSFUL MANAGEMENT OF AN EXTRAUTERINE FOETAL MUMMY IN A EWE – A CASE REPORT

M. Praveen Kumar [1], A.Thangamani[2], M. Srinivas[3], B. Chandra Prasad[4] and K. Sunny Praveen[*5]

Department of Veterinary Gynaecology and Obstetrics,
NTR College of Veterinary Science,
Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University
Gannavaram – 521 102, Andhra Pradesh, India.

ABSTRACT

An extra-uterine pregnancy, in which the embryos or foetuses are located outside the uterus, is an uncommon event. The following case report was about a ewe which brought with a history of completion of term and was exhibiting intermittent straining for the past two days with failure to deliver the lamb. Clinical and obstetrical examination revealed that the cervix was not dilated, which guided to opt for Laparo-hysterotomy. Peri-operative findings, revealed the presence of a live foetus with intact membranes in the peritoneal cavity and a foetal mummy in the anterior abdominal region. Hence, the present case places on record the successful management of extra-uterine pregnancy due to a tear in the uterus.

Keywords: Ewe, extra uterine foetal mummy and laparo-hysterotomy

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Extrauterine or ectopic pregnancy is a pathological condition wherein the foetus developed in a different site other than in the uterus due to many reasons (Corpa, 2006). The primary form of abdominal pregnancy occurs when a fertilised egg enters the peritoneal cavity and attaches to the mesentery or abdominal viscera, while the secondary form is when the oviduct or uterus ruptures, allowing the implanted foetus to escape into the peritoneal cavity. Nonetheless, secondary extra uterine pregnancy occurs on rare occasions in all domestic animals except mare (Corpa, 2006).

Ectopic pregnancy is infrequently diagnosed in veterinary medicine due to its rarity (Rosset *et al.,* 2011). The aetiology of uterine rupture is unknown, but it could be caused by violence or trauma, uterus torsion, uterine musculoskeletal weakness, or persistent perimetritis. There are no known causes or mechanisms for this pathological condition (Corpa, 2006).

[1]PhD. Scholar

[2]Assistant Professor (Contractual basis), Department of Veterinary Gynaecology and Obstetrics, Veterinary College, Gadag, Karnataka.

[3]Professor and Head,

[4]Assistant Professor, Department of Veterinary Clinical Complex

[5]Assistant Professor, Corresponding author Email id:sunnykurati@gmail.com

CASE HISTORY AND CLINICAL OBSERVATIONS

A two-year-old ewe was brought to the Obstetrical Ward, Veterinary Gynaecology and Obstetrics, NTR CVSc, Gannavaram, with a history of completion of term and exhibiting intermittent straining for the past two days with failure to deliver the lamb. The owner also reported that the ewe had expelled some foetal fluids at third month of gestation during its previous pregnancy, while no fetal mass was expelled. On clinical examination, the animal was dull, depressed and anorexic with enlargement of the abdomen on the left side. On ballottement of the abdomen, a firm structure resembling that of a foetus was palpable, and upon detailed obstetrical examination, it revealed that the cervix failed to dilate with the absence of vaginal discharges. Hence, Laparo-hysterotomy or caesarean section was opted to deliver the foetus and safeguard the dam's life.

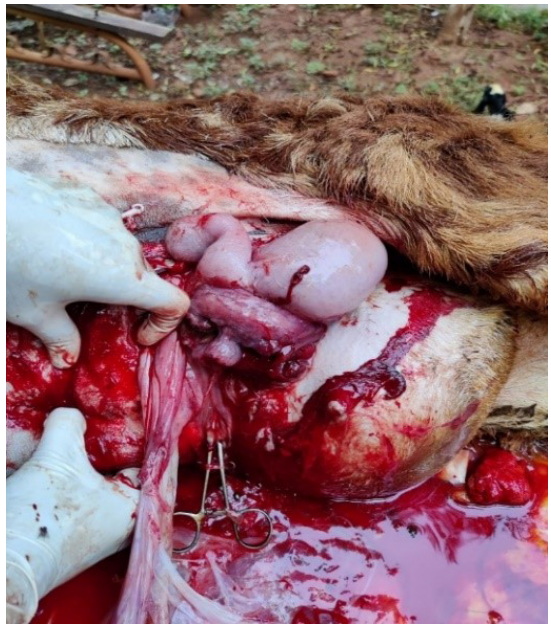

Fig 1: Tear on the gravid uterine horn

TREATMENT AND DISCUSSION

Laparo-hysterotomy was done in ventro-median approach under local anaesthesia using 2 % Lignocaine. During the surgical procedure it was found that the live foetus with intact foetal membranes was presented in the peritoneal cavity due to a tear in the gravid uterine horn (Fig 1). Upon removal of the live foetus (Fig 2), a mummified foetus was detected while ascertaining for internal bleeding, in the anterior abdominal region near the animal's diaphragm, which was encapsulated within the fibrous tissue. The extra uterine foetal mummy was also removed by manual separation of the fibrous tissue connections (Fig 3).The delivered lamb was

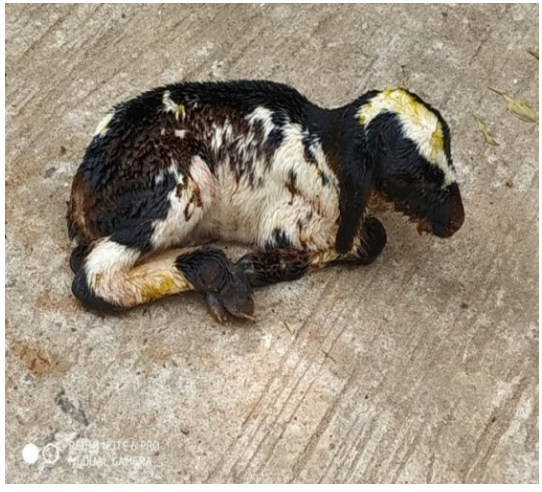

Fig 2: Live lamb

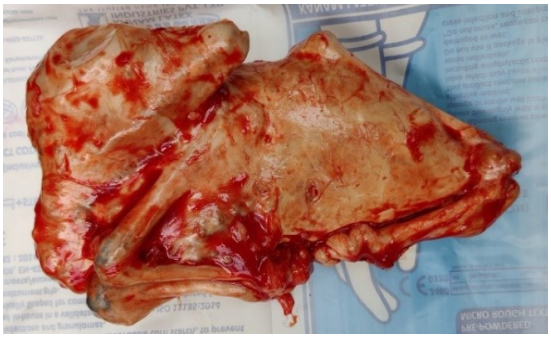

Fig 3: Extracted mummified foetus

active with normal vital parameters. Finally the uterine tear was sutured, and the abdomen was closed as per the standard surgical technique and the ewe had an uneventful recovery by the fifth day postoperatively.

Secondary extra uterine pregnancy occurs when a foetus reaches a recognised size in the uterus and then escapes either into the abdominal cavity through uterine rupture (abdominal pregnancies) or into the vaginal cavity through the cervix (vaginal pregnancies) (Corpa, 2006). Secondary extrauterine pregnancies have been previously reported in Murrah buffalo (Sheetal *et al.*, 2018), cow (Hedge, 1989), sheep (Mitchell, 1989), goat (Vaiyapuri *et al*., 2020) and cat (Ivanova *et al.*, 2019). Colhy (1986) reported that the cause of ectopia of the foetuses might be related to injury or traumatic rupture of the uterus during pregnancy. It was reported that extra uterine pregnancies in animals are asymptomatic and that the foetuses are detected by chance during laparo-hysterotomy (Corpa, 2006). The findings of the present case were in accordance with the observations of previous reports on ectopic pregnancy in different species. In the present case, extrauterine pregnancy could have occurred due to a tear in the uterus, which might also be a reason for lodging the foetal mummy of previous pregnancy.

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