

*“Pearls”
of
Veterinary Medicine*



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AT A GLANCE

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Anesthesiology

Abdominal Analgesia

Recent focus has moved toward **opioid-free protocols** due to adverse effects like constipation, nausea, dysphoria, and risks of hyperalgesia in animals. Opioids remain critical in severe cases but are increasingly being replaced with multimodal, non-opioid strategies

Analgesic options include lidocaine, ketamine, NSAIDs, medetomidine/dexmedetomidine and opioids.

Maropitant acts to both prevent vomiting as well as reduce visceral pain.

Options for Local Anesthetic Blocks:

Transversus Abdominis Plane (TAP) Block: Local anaesthetic is injected between the internal oblique and transversus abdominis muscles to provide analgesia to the ventrolateral abdominal wall. It can be done unilaterally or bilaterally, depending on the surgery. It has also been used for pain relief in human pancreatitis.

Rectus Abdominis Sheath Block: This block is an alternative to TAP for ventral mid- and cranial abdominal procedures. While evidence in dogs and cats is limited, it has provided good results for midline surgeries in the author's experience. Local anaesthetic is injected between the rectus abdominis muscle and its internal sheath to block the ventral cutaneous branches supplying the cranial third of the abdomen.

Quadratus Lumborum Block: This block provides both somatic and visceral analgesia for abdominal procedures

by injecting local anaesthetic between the quadratus lumborum and psoas minor at L1 or L2. It desensitizes nerves T13–L3 and the sympathetic chain, enabling visceral pain relief, but often does not cover T12, so cranial abdominal analgesia may be incomplete.

Epidural Anesthesia: This technique allows local anaesthetic or other drugs (α_2 agonists, opioids, corticosteroids) to be injected, usually via lumbosacral or sacrococcygeal puncture. For prolonged analgesia, a catheter can be placed for continuous drug administration.

Eliseo Belda Mellado, DVM, Southern European Vet Conf 2024.

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Behavior

Undesired scratching in cats

Scratching fulfills essential feline functions, including claw maintenance, marking, and social communication; however, when directed toward household items, it can strain the human-animal bond. This study surveyed 1,211 single-cat French households (all with at least one scratching post) to identify risk factors for undesired scratching occurring at least twice weekly. Key risk factors included the **presence of children** and disruptive, aggressive, or destructive cat temperaments. Elevated playfulness, longer play duration, and increased nocturnal activity were also associated with higher scratching levels, whereas lethargic, apprehensive, vivacious, boisterous, social, and tranquil traits showed minimal effect. Breed, sex, neuter status, and body condition were not significantly correlated. Positive reinforcement and pheromone use can reduce undesirable scratching, while punishment exacerbates it. Optimally **placing scratching posts in areas frequented by the cat and providing regular short interactive play sessions** with appropriate toys are strategies to reduce stress and mitigate undesirable scratching behaviors.

Demirbas, YS., et al. Front. Vet. Sci. (2024):11:1403068.

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