



STAPHYLOCOCCAL GANGRENOUS DERMATITIS IN A BACKYARD POULTRY UNIT

Gangrenous Dermatitis (GD) or wing rot is one of the important emerging diseases of poultry, causing severe economic losses (Shukla *et al.*, 1992). It is common in birds reared under deep litter system of housing. The disease is usually associated with immunosuppressive diseases like infectious bursal disease (IBD), chicken infectious anemia (CIA), aflatoxicosis and predisposing factors like over crowding, poor ventilation, poor hygiene, stress due to vaccination and cannibalism (Kumar *et al.*, 2005).

A eleven week old pullet was presented to the Veterinary College Hospital, Mannuthy, with the history of skin lesions on lower neck region and breast muscle. Another dead pullet with same lesions was also presented. The owner of the bird was having a small backyard poultry unit consisting of 20 pullets and eight adult birds. History revealed that the pullets were dying one by one without showing symptoms for the last few days.

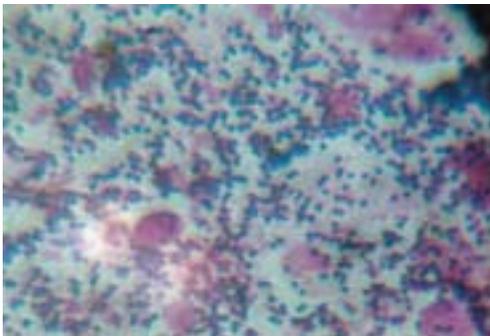


Fig. Gram positive cocci as grape like clusters. (1000x)

On examination, the dead bird was having reddish necrotic areas over the lower neck region and breast muscles. Erythematous spots were noticed on the skin overlying the wings. Impression smears were taken from the lesions, removing the surface of skin and the bird was subjected for post mortem examination.

Post mortem examination revealed swollen liver with focal necrotic areas and catarrhal enteritis. The impression smear from the skin lesions on Gram's staining revealed numerous Gram positive cocci in grape like clusters, suggestive of *Staphylococcus* sp. (Fig.). The disease was diagnosed as

gangrenous dermatitis, possibly caused by *Staphylococcus* sp.

Cephalexin @ 30mg /kg body weight twice daily orally was advised to the rest of the birds in the flock. After the administration of antibiotic no mortality was reported.

The outbreak occurred in pullets of 11 weeks of age. Natural outbreaks of GD have been reported in chicken aged 17 days to 20 weeks (Ficken, 1988). The bacteria associated with this outbreak appear as *Staphylococcus* sp. from the Gram stained smears. Kumar *et al.* (2005) isolated *Staphylococcus* from the outbreaks of GD in Tarai area of Uttaranchal. Shukla *et al.* (1992) isolated *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Clostridium* species from cases of GD and also reported that mixed infections with both bacteria resulted in increased mortality.

Summary

An outbreak of gangrenous dermatitis in a backyard poultry unit is reported.

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