Canine Trichoblastoma

General Information

Canine trichoblastoma is a tumor of basal epithelial cells that reside within the hair follicles in the skin. Trichoblastoma has been and still occasionally is referred to as a basal cell tumor, a more general diagnosis for a variety of tumors that arise from similar basaloid epithelial cells. There are six subtypes of trichoblastoma: ribbon, medusoid, trabecular, spindle, granular cell, and clear cell types. However, histologic subtype does not have prognostic significance.

Typical features of canine trichoblastoma are: slow growing, freely moveable within/beneath the skin, firm, usually solitary, and most commonly located on the head and neck (base of the ears is a very common location) but can occur anywhere in the skin.

Risk Factors

Trichoblastoma is fairly common in dogs, with Poodles and Setters at an increased risk of developing them. Older dogs are also at an increased risk of developing this type of tumor.
Treatment

Surgical removal of the tumor is the treatment of choice. If a definitive diagnosis of trichoblastoma can be achieved via cytology or incisional biopsy, surgical removal may not be necessary if the tumor does not bother the dog (or pet owner). In some cases, definitive diagnosis of trichoblastoma may require microscopic examination of the tumor by a veterinary pathologist.

Prognosis

Trichoblastoma is a benign tumor and does not metastasize. Complete excision is curative and the prognosis is excellent. Some dogs may develop more than one trichoblastoma throughout their lifetime.

Comparative Aspects

Cats and rabbits also commonly develop trichoblastoma. Trichoblastoma is occasionally seen in horses and sheep. It is not documented in cattle or ferrets. Humans can also develop trichoblastoma, but it is generally rare.
References

