LAMENESS MANAGEMENT IN A WORKING DOG WITH BILATERAL METACARPAL LESIONS AND SESAMOIDAL STRESS FRACTURES

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HYPOTHESIS

Positive effects of physical therapy on a 3 year-old male working Labrador with a recent history of 2-months front limb shifting-leg 2/5 lameness and with radiographic findings of bilateral sesamoidal fragmentation and distal metacarpal erosion.

Identification and treatment of the biomechanical issues that caused the bilateral stress lesions in order to solve the lameness and allow the dog back to return to work after a proper reconditioning program.

METHODS

1. initial static and dynamic evaluations and identification of the biomechanical patterns that likely caused bone lesions and lameness.

The dog showed the tendency of loading his front end more than his hind end (bilateral shoulder and pectoral muscles showing relative hypertrophy and hypertone); there was uneven left-to-right hind limb load and varus deformity.

2. a cycle of 10 weekly physical therapy sessions aimed at postural correction, through reinforcement of paraspinal and hind limbs muscle chains, and relaxation of the anterior muscle groups, prompting a shift of weight load onto the hind end:

spike ball massage, pulsed-waves electromagnetic therapy, postural, wobble pillow and poles exercises.

3. specific schedule of exercises (e.g. sit-to-stand and forward pulls) **and a progressive reconditioning program,** as the lamenes grade consistently decreased.

RESULTS

Along the treatment period, the patient constantly improved, **lameness completely disappeared around the 3rd week of treatment**, and the dog was ready to go back to his regular training and working schedule.

He went back to work at full regimen shortly after the 10-weeks treatment cycle, receiving **maintenance physical therapy treatments (monthly sessions, decreasing to one session every 45-60 days).**

After 1 year of soundness, regular work and maintenance treatment sessions, X-rays still show the same lesions as at day zero.

CONCLUSIONS

Postural balance, proper conditioning and physical therapy aiming at control of conformational, compensational and biomechanical issues play a very relevant role for the effectiveness and comfort of movement.