USE OF MODIFIED SCHAFFER'S METHOD FOR THE DETORSION OF UTERUS IN A PLURIPAROUS EWE

A. TEJA[1]*, S. SHANMUKHI[2], B. HEMKUMAR[3] AND K. MOULI KRISHNA[4]

Department of Veterinary Gynaecology and Obstetrics
College of Veterinary Science - Tirupati, Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University, Andhra Pradesh - 517 502

ABSTRACT

Pervaginal examination in pluriparous ewe with the history of dystocia was carried out using a vaginal speculum. The twisting of vagina in clockwise fashion was revealed, however, the cervix was not visible. Schaffer's method of detorsion using a plank was adopted with a few modifications. The lambing was successful after rolling the ewe on its right side.

Keywords: Dystocia, Ewe, Schaffer's method, Uterine torsion

INTRODUCTION

Uterine torsion is rarely noticed in ewe and occurs at the end of first stage of labour when the vaginal examination is carried out to probe the cause of delay in lambing (Noakes *et al*., 2009). Regarding the site of uterine torsion, pre-cervical is difficult to diagnose on per-vaginal examination, however, post-cervical can be diagnosed by palpating the stenosed anterior vagina, whose walls are usually disposed in oblique spiral indicating the direction of torsion. Here, a case of uterine trosion in ewe and its successful treatment by Scahffer's modified method is discussed.

CASE HISTORY AND OBSERVATIONS

A non-descript ewe (age ~3 year) in third gestation and at the end of gestation period was reported for difficulty in lambing. The clinical examination revealed that the animal was dull with no evidence of water bag rupture or escape of fetal fluids from the birth canal. The vulva was enlarged, relaxed, swollen and moderately edematous. The udder was fully developed. Pervaginal examination with vaginal speculum revealed obstruction of vagina caudal to the cervix. The folds of the vaginal mucosa were converged conically towards cranial side. The incomplete twist of the vaginal folds was noticed by passing the finger beyond the obstruction, it was directed downwards and forward and twisted to the right side indicating post cervical clockwise (right side) uterine torsion. The degree of torsion was <180º.

TREATMENT AND DISCUSSION

The ewe was casted on the examination table in right lateral recumbency with the fore and hind limbs secured separately. Schaffer's method of uterine detorsion which is used in large animals was adopted with few modifications. Briefly, a wooden plank covered with rubber bag (Insulation bag) of 1.5×0.5 feet dimensions was placed on the left flank of the animal (Figure 1). To fix the position of fetus inside the abdominal cavity pressure was applied on the plank with a hand and the rolling of ewe was done as in the case of large animals. The ewe was rolled on its long axis toward right side by manoeuvring the limbs of the dam in an coordinated manner while maintaining the pressure on the plank (Figure 1). The vaginal examination was made with gloved fingers to ascertain the detorsion. On two complete rotations, the torsion was relieved and water bag was noticed in the birth canal. One live fetus was delivered by applying gentle traction after administering caudal epidural anaesthesia (Figure 1). Following delivery the dam was administered supportive therapy and was

[1]Assistant Professor, [2]M.V.Sc. Scholar, [3]Ph.D. Scholar, [4]Professor cum Head; *dralluteja@gmail.com

Figure 1: Successful detorsion of uterus in ewe using a plank

discharged 2 h after the treatment and an uneventful recovery was observed. In ewes, the success rate of 55.17% was reported for the correction of uterine torsion by the Schaffer method (Arthur *et al.,* 2001).

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