REVIEW OF REPRODUCTIVE PATHOLOGIES IN FEMALE BIRDS

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BACKGROUND

Reproductive disorders in female birds are the result of a complex combination of hormonal, physiological and behavioural factors. They are a frequent reason of consultation in the exotic animal clinic. The diagnostic of these diseases is difficult because of the unspecific clinical signs and the convergence of the reproductive, gastrointestinal and urinary tract in the cloaca. Despite that, prevention and treatment of most of the pathologies are very similar.

OBJECTIVES

To do a bibliographic review of the different reproductive pathologies reported in companion birds, focusing on those that are most relevant based on prevalence and clinical signs. **We will describe**: ethology, most affected species, clinical signs, diagnosis and treatment.

OVARY

Oophoritis: inflammation of the ovary. Infectious ethology mainly.

Neoplasia: granulosa cell tumours mainly.

Cystic ovarian disease: due to endocrine disorders, anatomic abnormalities or ovarian pathologies.

LAYING PATHOLOGIES

Egg binding-dystocia: inability off the egg to pass through the oviduct. Can be caused by a lot of factors.

Chronic egg laying: repeated clutches or larger than normal. Caused by hormonal or environmental factors.

CLOACA

Cloacal prolapse: due to excessive celomic straining, chronic hormonal stimulation, masturbation...

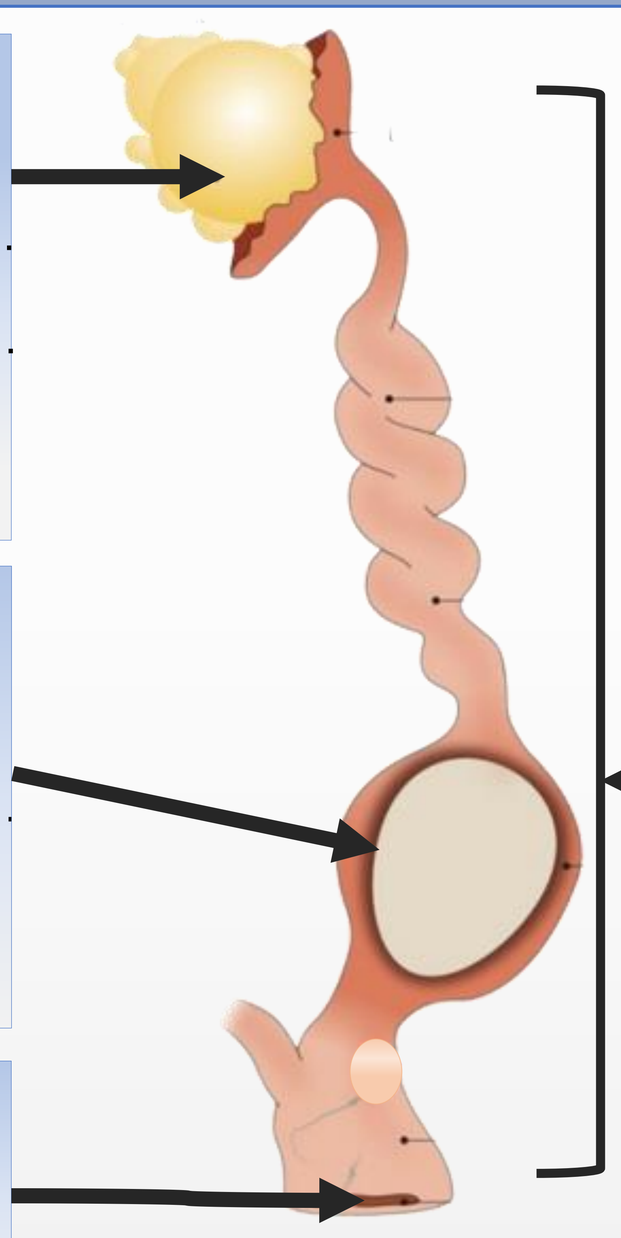

Figure 1: reproductive tract of a female bird. Illustration made by Nigel Hawtin

OVIDUCT

Salpingitis and metritis: inflammation of the oviduct. Associated with concomitant infections. *E.coli*.

Neoplasia: adenocarcinomas mainly.

Prolapse: due to excessive coelomic straining (e.g. dystocia, intracoelomic mass, egg laying, etc).

Impaction: oviductal obstruction. Mainly due to salpingitis, metritis or dystocia.

Torsion: tear of oviductal ligaments. Usually cause dystocia.

Rupture: secondary to egg-binding or iatrogenic.

Cystic hyperplasia: due to improper oviduct formation or endocrine diseases.

COELOMITIS

Egg yolk coelomitis: inflammation of the coelomic cavity due to free yolk. Caused by ectopic ovulation.

CLINICAL SIGNS

Usually very unspecific. The most common ones are: anorexia, weight loss, lethargy, depression, decreased egg production, coelomic distension, coelomitis and coelomic effusion.

DIAGNOSIS

CBC, biochemistry, imaging tests (Rx, echography), coelomic centesis, coeloscopy or coelotomy, cytology, culture with sensitivity tests and biopsy with histopathologic tests.

TREATMENT

The initial approach is usually based on supportive therapy, antibiotics if the ethology is infectious, treatment of clinical signs such as coelomic effusion (coelomic centesis) and surgery if necessary (e.g. salpingohisterectomy).

CONCLUSIONS

1. Reproductive pathologies are frequent in companion birds.
2. A great difference in number of cases is found when studying the diseases separately.
3. There is a high interconnexion between all studied pathologies.
4. A lack of specificity in the clinical signs has been observed in almost all the described diseases.
5. The initial approach of practically all pathologies is the same.