Compassionate Closure: Hospice & Euthanasia Discussion/Q&A
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Pre-Euthanasia Sedation Protocol: This may seem cumbersome, but it takes less than a minute to draw up and reduces negative side effects (decreased blood pressure, stinging, vomiting) while giving an excellent sedation that often results in snoring.

Telazol 5mL bottle: 100mg/mL
Atropine 1/120GR (0.54mg/mL)
Xylazine 100mg/mL
Acepromazine 10mg/mL

Cats:
Telazol 0.15mL/10 pounds
Atropine 0.5mL
Acepromazine 0.5mL

Combine in one syringe and administer subcutaneously with a 22 or 25g needle in the scruff or rump. Cats always surprise me. Some object strenuously and some don’t react at all. I always warn the owner ahead of time that they often find enough energy to yell and swipe at me, but that they are very happy within a minute. Most owners apologize to me if their cat responds negatively. If you have a very aggressive cat, IM injection is also extremely effective. Remember, too that a very aggressive cat may be injected through a cloth carrier or through the bars of a hard carrier. Use gravity to situate the patient where you want them and inject quickly IM.

Dogs:
Telazol 0.1mL/10 pounds
Xylazine 0.05mL/10 pounds (weight divided by 2 and then divided by 100)
Equal parts Acepromazine and Atropine – 0.5mL each for up to 25 pounds, 1mL each for up to 60 pounds, 1.5mL each for up to 90 pounds, and 2mL each for over 90 pounds.

So, a 30 pound dog would receive 0.3mL telazol + 0.15mL xylazine + 1 mL atropine + 1mL acepromazine mixed in one syringe and given subcutaneously.

This volume of drug is often intimidating to veterinarians and technicians asked to administer it. I use a 22g needle for large dogs and a 25g needle for small dogs. Out of 150+ patients, I have had two jump and yelp. The rest may twitch the skin or look at me, but I scratch next to the syringe and inject slowly (this is extremely important). I am giving this drug with the owner restraining (usually poorly), so in a clinical setting with a technician, it is even easier.

This cocktail takes anywhere from 30 seconds (in a very debilitated animal) to 20 minutes (in a few large, fat dogs whose weight may not have been accurately estimated by the owner). Most are asleep in 5-10 minutes. The owners love this time that they can pet and kiss their baby. They often relax enough to start telling me stories about them. Out of 150+ patients, I have been dissatisfied with the sedation level in only a few:

1) A cat with severe ascites and an abdominal tumor who was still pulling his leg back from me (weakly) as I tried to inject IV. I administered a second dose of telazol IM.
2) A 150ish pound Rottweiler who moved her head for 20 minutes (the very nervous owner had a stopwatch and timed it because I had said it would only take 15 minutes) and finally slept peacefully around the 25 minute mark.
3) A grossly obese Cushingoid hound mix with severe skin thinning who kept lifting her head when her parents tried to leave the room. I gave a second dose of telazol/xylazine IM. In retrospect, I realized there was likely compromised subcutaneous circulation and therefore decreased absorption of the drugs.

Remember that in the clinic, the pet will likely be far more agitated than at home, so the increased heart rate will help them respond to the sedation more quickly. You may find the atropine is unnecessary.

The xylazine rarely causes vomiting at this dose. I occasionally see a small dry-heave or lip licking, but the pet is unconscious. Most dogs I’ve had vomit were ones that had been vomiting to begin with.
Sample NSAID release form. Consult your legal counsel before using.

NSAID Release

My pet __________________ is entering into hospice care which means that I have chosen not to pursue further diagnostics and treatment at this time. I am asking my veterinarian to do what is necessary to keep ______________ comfortabe for the time we have left together. I perceive that my pet is in pain and am asking my veterinarian, ______________, to prescribe pain medication. I am declining bloodwork to monitor the effects of medication on the liver, kidneys, etc. I understand that pain medications can cause liver disease, kidney disease, ulcers in the digestive tract, constipation and/or diarrhea. Other symptoms may also be seen. Use of this drug may in fact reduce the length of my pet's life. However, I am willing to accept this because keeping my pet comfortable is my goal. I will not use these drugs with other drugs or differently than prescribed without permission from my veterinarian. I understand that I may remove my pet from hospice care at any time to pursue treatment with my veterinarian or have my pet euthanized. I agree to keep open communication with my veterinarian about my pet's condition.

Pet Parent

Signed: ___________________________ Date: _____________

Print Name: __________________________________________

Veterinarian

Signed: ___________________________ Date: _____________

Print Name: __________________________________________