

Treatment of an Occipital Fracture via Craniectomy

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Signalment. The 4-years old Yorkshire Terrier was referred to Veterinary Medical Center with blunt head trauma. Subcutaneous bleeding and swelling in his face were detected by gross examination. Ataxia was remarkable in neurological examination, and radiographic examination showed occipital fracture.

Results. The fragment of occipital bone was detached dorsally and bilaterally and the ventral portion of the fragment was incompletely attached with the calvarium. After CT scan, we confirmed that the fragment could be mechanically unstable, and leaving the fragment in the injured site might increase the risk of further injury. Consequently we decided to remove the fragment instead of repairing fracture with orthopedic implants. The defective area was covered by muscular flap. Before the patient was discharged, the client was educated not to compress defected area. The result of craniectomy is favorable until 2 months postoperatively, and the neurologic sign such as ataxia has improved gradually.

Clinical relevance. Head trauma is a common problem encountered in small animal practice. Main causes of head injuries include motor vehicle accidents, falls and blunt trauma. The skull fractures are not as common as other types of head trauma. Craniectomy with decompressive effects is one of available surgical treatment for fragmented skull fracture.

Key words: Occipital fracture, craniectomy, head trauma, skull, dog

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