

RETRIEVAL OF FISH HOOK FROM THE PHARYNGEAL REGION IN A BUFFALO

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SUMMARY

A two year old female buffalo was presented with the symptoms of excessive salivation and anorexia for the last four days following suspected ingestion of a metallic sharp foreign body. Plain radiograph of the neck region revealed lodgment of metallic fish hook like object in the pharyngeal region. This foreign body was retrieved manually through oral cavity of the buffalo under sedation. Animal recovered uneventfully within five days.

Key words: Buffalo, fish hook, pharyngeal region

Ingestion and lodgment of foreign bodies within body tissue are common in bovine primarily due to their indiscriminate feeding habits (Singh and Nigam, 1981) and sometimes also due to trauma or iatrogenic injury. The relative lack of sensitivity in prehensile organs such as lips and tongue in bovine is considered to be the main predisposing factor for such eventualities. As a consequence, buffaloes close to human habitat often swallow metallic objects such as nails and pieces of wires that have been carelessly left in their feeding areas (Jones *et al.*, 1996; Desiye and Mersha, 2012). Entrance and migration of such foreign object through the body cavities and tissues or its lodgment anywhere in the body may lead to various complications that differ according to the nature of the foreign body and its migration route (Cheel and Sethi, 1999; Calfee and Manning, 2002).

Management of such clinical conditions often requires time consuming surgeries with variable outcomes. Thus accidental ingestion of foreign body in dairy animals may prove to be of great economic importance due to its associated morbidity leading to loss of production and in some cases mortality as well (Radostits *et al.*, 2007). Though metallic foreign bodies lodged in upper gastrointestinal tract of bovine can be readily diagnosed through radiographs (Spouge *et al.*, 1990; Hunt *et al.*, 2004) but their retrieval may sometimes be quite challenging. A case of foreign body lodgment in the pharyngeal region of a buffalo is described here.

A two year old female buffalo was presented to the Teaching Veterinary Clinical Complex of this university with a history of suspected ingestion of foreign body four days ago. Since then the animal was anorectic and was showing excessive salivation but without any signs of tympany. The animal was making effort but was unable to swallow feed and water properly. On clinical examination, rectal temperature was slightly elevated, whereas heart rate, respiration rate and pulse were within normal range. Mouth gag was applied and oral cavity was explored thoroughly but no foreign body was palpated. Haematological analysis revealed 66% neutrophils and 34% lymphocytes. In addition, the haemoglobin content was 9 g%. However, lateral radiograph of the neck region revealed lodgment of metallic potential foreign body simulating fish hook in its pharyngeal region (Fig. 1).

It was decided to attempt retrieval of foreign body manually orally. For this the buffalo was secured in the sternal recumbent position. It was sedated with inj. xylazine hydrochloride @0.05 mg/kg b. wt. intravenously. The oral cavity of the buffalo was opened and a mouth gag was applied. Thereafter, the hand was inserted into the mouth and the pharyngeal region of the buffalo was explored with the fingers. After feeling the foreign body, it could be grasped quite easily with thumb and index finger, pushed slightly backward to dislodge the hook from soft tissue and was retrieved through oral cavity by guarding the tip of hook with palm to avoid injury to the tongue and palate. The recovered foreign body was

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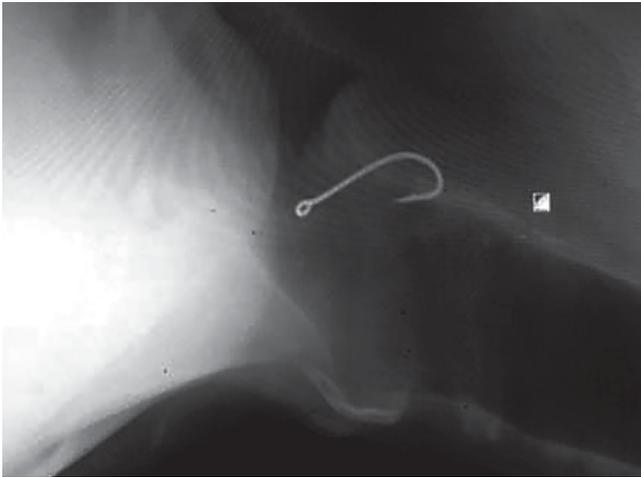


Fig 1. Plain radiograph revealing metallic potential foreign body in pharyngeal area (Lateral view)



Fig 2. Recovered metallic foreign body (Fish hook) indeed a fish hook (Fig. 2). The foreign body lodgment area was explored again with fingers which revealed no rupture or any other associated injury.

Post operatively, inj. strepto-penicillin @2.5gm b.i.d., inj. meloxicam @15 ml IM s.i.d. for five consecutive days and inj. avil @10 ml s.i.d. for two days was administered by the intramuscular route. Owner was advised to provide gruel like soft feed for two days. The case emphasizes the importance of manual exploration of the pharyngeal area through the oral cavity of bovine to make an attempt to retrieve any lodged foreign body before undertaking more invasive surgeries for the purpose.

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