Foreword

“What we do for ourselves dies with us. What we do for others lives on.”
—Carl A. Osborne

In 1978, we declared war on urolithiasis. In 1981, we developed the Minnesota Urolith Center to investigate the causes, cures, and prevention of urolithiasis. Using state of the science diagnostic techniques, the Minnesota Urolith Center currently analyzes approximately 55,000 stones per year, which are submitted by veterinarians from 48 countries. Since its inception, the center has analyzed more than 500,000 uroliths from more than 100 species of companion animals (including dogs, cats, rabbits, ferrets, guinea pigs, hamsters, horses, and birds), farm animals (including cows, sheep, goats, and pigs), and wild animals (including elephants, dolphins, whales, hippopotami, kangaroos, mink, monkeys, pandas, snakes, tortoises, turtles, lions, and wolves). With the support of an educational gift from Hill’s Pet Nutrition, Inc. and individual donors, we do not collect a monetary fee for this service. Rather, our purpose is to help animals by collecting, evaluating, and sharing epidemiologic data about naturally occurring stone disease and by providing diagnostic information about risk factors to our veterinary colleagues. This type of information cannot be obtained from fee-for-service laboratories. The Minnesota Urolith Center is unique in its ability to obtain data from large populations of animals, thus enhancing discovery of demographic, environmental, and etiologic associations.

We are advocates of the philosophy that the best veterinary teaching hospitals in the world not only use contemporary knowledge; they create it. By studying the epidemiology of urinary stones and then using information about associated risk factors to design studies of the underlying causes of stones, our center pioneered the development of safe, effective, and affordable methods to medically dissolve and prevent sterile struvite, infection-induced struvite, cystine, and ammonium urate uroliths. We currently are studying ways to dissolve and prevent calcium oxalate, calcium phosphate, and silica stones.

We also pioneered the development of nonsurgical techniques to remove uroliths from the lower urinary tract of dogs and cats. These include retrograde urohydropulsion and voiding hydropropulsion. We recently incorporated laser lithotripsy as a management tool for patients with uroliths that would otherwise require surgery.

With the goal of improving the quality of care that we can collectively provide for our patients, help us rewrite these articles in a future issue of the Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice without stating, “The solutions to these stone problems are unknown; further studies are needed.” Help us write the article that will symbolize urolithiasis as a historic event at the time of the medical “Stone Age.”

Won’t you join us in leaving no stone unturned as we strive for this goal? We invite you to submit uroliths to our center for analysis. Consult our website...
(http://www.cvm.umn.edu) for a submission form, follow the link to “Department and Centers” to find the Minnesota Urolith Center, and then follow the menu.

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