PREFACE

Whenever I lecture on pain management, I quote Albert Schweitzer because it is important for all of us to think about the pain experienced by our patients so that we do not ignore it, and to recognize that we, as veterinarians, especially in North America, are privileged with the license to manage pain by whatever modality is appropriate for the individual situation. When asked to edit this issue of *The Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice*, I realized it was a great opportunity to select a group of veterinarians who have devoted much of their time to pain management in their particular area of specialization. The information in this publication is a combination of evidence-based and experience-based medicine. In adding the years of experience each author has in the field of pain management, there is a combined total in excess of 200 years. While an attempt has been made to bring you the “evidence” in the form of peer-review studies, the day-to-day management of pain in the individual patient has equal value and we, the authors of this issue, are grateful for the opportunity to share this “experience-based evidence” with you.

To understand the mechanism of action of the various analgesics and modalities available, the physiology of pain must also be understood. The first article, “Physiology of Pain,” sets the stage for the understanding of the genesis of pain and its perception. This clear and eloquent presentation of the topic aids the practitioner in understanding the potential pain that the patient is experiencing and assists in the selection of an appropriate analgesic regimen based on the mechanism of action of the various drugs and modalities outlined in the subsequent articles. The authors of these articles have incorporated information on mechanism of action of medications and techniques so that the practitioner is able to select individual or combination modalities such as local anesthesia,
epidural analgesia, opioid and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory analgesics, and to consider alternative therapies such as acupuncture and nutraceutical treatments in specific situations.

In consideration of the many situations requiring prevention or management of pain, including the species and age of the patients, individual articles offer detailed information dealing with perioperative analgesia, management of cancer pain, chemical restraint for emergency procedures, management of acute pain, indications and contraindications for the use of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory analgesics, and the management of osteoarthritis. With the administration of analgesics, one has to consider potential interactions with other medications the patient may be receiving or that are planned in the overall pain management regimen. The article entitled “Pharmacologic Considerations for Opiate Analgesic and Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs,” which describes some drug interactions, has been included to assist with planning of the analgesic regimen.

The complexities of the genesis and maintenance of the various types of pain experienced are slowly being unfolded. With the information generated by the many studies conducted, the use of adjunctive treatments for refractory pain described here offers hope for the treatment of this type of pain in our veterinary patients.

An important aspect of pain management is the recognition that pain exists. The article entitled “Pain Assessment and General Approach to Management” is designed to aid the practitioner in recognizing behavior associated with pain and to facilitate decision making in its treatment. With this information, together with the information provided in the other articles in this issue, the practitioner will gain confidence and experience in treating pain.

I would like to thank my colleagues for donating their valuable time and for sharing their expertise in the preparation of this issue of The Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice. Thanks also go to John Vassallo and the editorial staff of W.B. Saunders for their assistance in the preparation of the manuscripts.

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