Preface

Congenital Abnormalities of the Skull, Vertebral Column, and Central Nervous System

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Editor

This issue of the *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice* is meant to provide the practicing clinician with an overview of the more commonly encountered congenital abnormalities affecting the central nervous system, as well as various diagnostic and therapeutic options available for these disorders. As is often the case with this sort of amalgamation of topics, there exists some degree of controversy regarding these disorders, especially surrounding what constitutes appropriate treatment. Controversy is not necessarily a negative thing, though. Tupac Shakur once stated, “out of controversy comes conversation, out of conversation comes action.” This is actually a partial quotation. The first part of this quotation described controversy as being a product of anger. Although I doubt many veterinarians become angry over the diseases described in the following pages, I feel that the complexity and severity of many of the disorders covered in this issue can lead to frustration for both the clinician and the pet owner. As you will learn (if you don’t know this already) by reading through these articles, many of these disorders are still a source of frustration, even though progress has been made in their diagnosis and treatment over the years. Fortunately, we have made tremendous progress in our understanding of these congenital problems, as reflected in the voluminous original research publications over the last decade. We still have a lot of work to accomplish, but things have come a long way in a very short period of time. My hope is that this issue will—in addition to serving as a general information source—be useful as a springboard for further conversation among clinicians, conversation that will lead to action for the benefit of our patients.

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