Generalized tetanus in a shelter-housed puppy

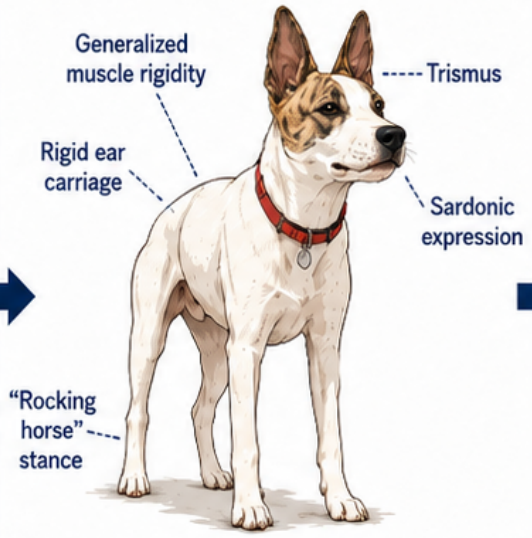
Case report graphical abstract

1 Shelter setting and suspected exposure



- Shelter-housed puppy
- Possible entry via small tarsal wounds exposed to soil

2 Acute presentation



- CBC, serum biochemistry, abdominal ultrasonography: unremarkable
- *Toxoplasma gondii* / *Neospora caninum* serology: negative

Diagnosis: generalized tetanus

3 Management

- Antimicrobial therapy
- Sedation and analgesia
- Equine tetanus antitoxin after negative intradermal test
- Quiet, darkened environment
- Assisted feeding
- Manual bladder expression
- Ocular lubrication
- Padded bedding and repositioning

Care shared between the shelter clinic by day and staff homes overnight

4 Outcome



- Intensive nursing care for approximately 5 weeks
- Clinical signs resolved gradually over approximately 10 weeks
- Full recovery at 10-month follow-up
- Adopted as a healthy family dog

No mechanical ventilation, urinary catheterization, or feeding tube required

A shelter-housed puppy with generalized tetanus recovered fully after early recognition, antitoxin administration, and intensive supportive care.

This case shows that successful management of canine tetanus is possible in a resource-limited shelter when close team collaboration and sustained nursing care are achievable.