

Metatarsal Fistulation of the German Shepherd Dog

Metatarsal fistulation of the German Shepherd Dog is an uncommon condition characterized by the formation of draining tracts in the skin of the metatarsal (hind limb) footpad. The cause and mechanism of disease is unknown but an autoimmune disease may be responsible.



The condition occurs in the German Shepherd Dog and German Shepherd mixed breeds. Lesions have well-defined borders with single or multiple draining tracts and are located on the skin surface of the metatarsal footpad. The draining tract oozes a watery, blood-tinged discharge. Both hind limbs are affected. Secondary bacterial infections often develop and therefore, scars are a common clinical finding in chronic lesions.

Metatarsal fistulation of the German Shepherd Dog can be diagnosed based on history, clinical findings, and ruling out other possible diagnoses.

This condition may be difficult to control and is not cured. A topical application of 0.1% tacrolimus ointment applied twice a day can be used in conjunction with the antibiotic tetracycline and niacinamide. Systemic glucocorticoids such as prednisolone given orally may be used then ta-

pered to a maintenance regimen. Alternatively, the drug cyclosporine given orally may also be tried.