

Plasma Cell Pododermatitis of Cats

Plasma cell pododermatitis of cats is a rare disorder associated with plasma cell infiltration into one or more footpads. The affected pad or pads become soft and swollen due to a gradual accumulation of plasma cells and granulation tissue. The cause of the disease is unknown, although an immune-mediated etiology has been suggested. There is no breed, age, or sex predisposition.

The condition generally affects only a single pad, however an entire pad or several pads may be affected. The pad most often affected is the central metacarpal (fore limb) pad.

Clinical findings are almost unique for this disorder. Initially, there is a soft, painless swelling of the affected pad or pads and a pale blue or violet discoloration may be apparent. Ulceration of the pad may occur resulting in a mound of hemorrhagic granulation tissue. Animals rarely suffer from pain and discomfort. Animals may also exhibit local enlarged lymph nodes. Secondary bacterial infections can also occur.

Diagnostic confirmation requires histopathologic examination of biopsy samples. Stained impression smears taken from exudate of a lesion may also reveal plasma cells.

The majority of cases will resolve with administration of the antibiotic doxycycline given orally for 4-8 weeks. Other treatment options include surgical excision of affected areas, bandaging, chrysotherapy, systemic antibacterial agents, and glucocorticoids. However, these treatments are usually not as consistently effective as doxycycline.

