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Case study: canine cardiac ablation

Case study: cardiac ablation cures Labrador's ventricular pre-excitation

Bob, an eight-year-old yellow Labrador, was born with tricuspid valve dysplasia. The condition was manageable up until the last six months when his owner, Pamela Schwartz of Farmington, N.Y., witnessed repeated episodes of racing heartbeat in Bob. During these episodes, Bob was only able to sit down and stare. These episodes could happen up to twice a day and last for one to two hours.

Bob's primary veterinarian, Dr. Stuart Gluckman '72 of [Mendon Village Animal Hospital](#), referred Bob to the [Cornell University Hospital for Animals](#) (CUHA) after determining that Bob would need more specialized treatment for his condition. Schwartz then brought Bob to CUHA to be evaluated by the cardiology service. During this visit, Dr. Flavia Giacomazzi, second-year cardiology resident, and Dr. Romain Pariaut, associate professor of cardiology, identified ventricular pre-excitation in the dog,



which likely explained the clinical signs that Bob experienced, including the tachycardia.

Based on the results of the cardiology tests performed, Pariaut and Giacomazzi determined that Bob was a candidate for cardiac mapping and ablation. This consists in finding the precise location of the extra electrical pathway with catheters that are threaded through blood vessels into various spots in the heart. The pathway is then ablated using heat that is delivered through the tip of a catheter.

Cardiac ablation is the recommended treatment for this condition in people. However, it is rarely performed in dogs,



because it requires specific equipment and expertise that can only be gained after several years of training. Currently, cardiac ablation is only available in less than five veterinary centers in the world, including the United States.

Fortunately, CUHA's cardiology section has studied arrhythmias in animals for many years under the leadership of Dr. Sydney N. Moïse, professor of medicine, and Pariaut, who was a resident at Cornell between 2002 and 2005, and joined the faculty last September with the goal of developing a clinical program dedicated to the treatment of arrhythmias with ablation. "To start this project, we purchased an ablation system," explains Pariaut. "The expertise in cardiac ablation comes from Dr. Roberto Santilli, an Italian veterinary cardiologist and adjunct professor of cardiology at Cornell, who has more experience than anybody else in this field of veterinary medicine."

The Schwartz family agreed to move forward with the procedure that could restore their dog's quality of life. On February 26th, the CUHA cardiac team performed the procedure under the supervision of Santilli. The extra pathway was located and successfully ablated. Bob was able to leave the hospital the next day, and is expected to have no recurrence of his heart problem. He will come back to Cornell for recheck evaluations over the next several months.

"Our experience with Cornell was wonderful," says Pamela Schwartz. "From the great care he got from the surgeons, to the constant updates we received from the wonderful students, we were absolutely positive Bob was in great hands."

Since the procedure, Bob's symptoms have disappeared. "He has a whole new lease on life," says Schwartz. "He's like a two-year old again—chasing squirrels, swimming in the pool—he's having a ball."

The CUHA cardiology service will continue to offer cardiac ablation to eligible canine patients under the expert guidance of Santilli.

"We are excited that the collaboration with Dr. Santilli will continue, as he has agreed to spend 10 to 15 weeks a year at Cornell for the next several years," says Pariaut, "and that we will be able to offer this new treatment modality to many dogs."

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Case study: Ambulatory Clinic cures ketosis in dairy herd

The ambulatory and production medicine service works regularly with a small dairy operation made up of Jersey cows. This dairy had recently acquired a dozen springing heifers, many of which, over a three-month period, had difficulty birthing. "Normally, Jerseys calve easily because their babies are small," says Dr. Jessica McArd, assistant professor of ambulatory and production medicine. "But with this group, we had two stillborn calves, several cases of dystocia, and other emergencies."

Additionally, one heifer who had recently calved began acting very strangely, sucking on everything within reach in an obsessive manner. The ambulatory clinicians identified this behavior as an example of nervous ketosis, in which severe elevations of ketones cause cerebral disturbance in patients.



With such extreme symptoms, the ambulatory service team knew the heifer would require a dose of carbohydrates, in the form of dextrose, as soon as possible. Because cows are ruminants, simply feeding the sick heifer a bottle of sugar water would not be effective, as the sugar would be consumed completely by the rumen microbes and lead to a dangerous build-up in acids. A sub-cutaneous injection of dextrose would be dangerous as well, as the sugar causes tissue damage and would lead to necrosis around the injection. The only solution was an IV of the sugar solution, which an on-call clinician had to

administer after-hours.

The next day, another heifer from the same herd came down with the same condition, which was highly unusual. "These two cases of nervous ketosis, along with all the issues this herd had with calving, raised red flags for us," says McArt. "We knew something was probably happening at the herd level to cause all these problems."

To confirm their suspicions, Resident Toni Domino tested the herd for ketosis, and found that 8 of the 12 cows were at a clinical level. "At this point, we knew that something was wrong with what the herd was eating," McArt says. The herd's feed was tested for nutritional content, and was found to be completely devoid of salt. The lack of that key compound indicated that the feed was grossly lacking in other essential nutrients and minerals. "We told the dairy manager to fire their nutritionist and hire someone who knows what they're doing."

The dairy managers took the advice, and, upon hiring a new nutritionist and changing the cows' feed, the ketotic animals became normal and healthy. Since then, the cows have calved without issue and have displayed no signs of ketosis.

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Case Study: endoscopy removes fish hook from turtle

Julia Vanaman, master's student in conservation biology at SUNY's College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) was searching for a radiotelemetry tag that she suspected had fallen off one of the turtles she was following for her research. Vanaman eventually found the tag, and was lucky enough to also find its owner, a common map turtle she had named "Persephone," nearby. Vanaman quickly noticed that Persephone had a large fishing hook lodged in the back of her mouth, and took her to a local wildlife rehabilitator, however removal was not possible. During transport to a local veterinarian, Persephone swallowed the hook. Radiographs confirmed it to be in the stomach, and the turtle was referred to the Janet L. Swanson Wildlife Health Center (WHC) at Cornell University for surgery.

Most fishing hooks, especially larger ones, do not dissolve over time and carry the risk of perforating through the tissues of the animal, resulting in life-threatening injury. Some species of turtles, such as



snapping turtles, have a very reduced shell underneath, and thus hook removal surgeries can often be performed by approaches through soft tissues and heal fairly rapidly. In the majority of turtle species, however, including map turtles, the plastron (bottom shell) is extensive, resulting in very reduced access to the inside organs of the turtle and requiring that a “window” be cut through the bone of the shell in order to access the stomach and hook. This is a major surgical procedure, and one that requires several months and up to a year of healing time and rehabilitation for the turtle.

Persephone was put under general anesthesia for the procedure by assistant professor Dr. Sara Childs-Sanford, zoological medicine intern Dr. Cindy Hopf, and fourth-year veterinary student Marina Regalado. The decision was made to attempt removal of the hook via endoscopy, as this would preclude the need for surgery and a prolonged recovery time. The chances of this being successful were thought to be low, however, due to the small size of the turtle compared to the equipment, and the chance that the hook may already be embedded in the tissues and not able to be removed by this method. The team passed a rigid endoscope through the oral cavity and into the stomach where the hook was identified. They then passed an endoscopic forcep and used it to grab onto the hook, which luckily had only a single, very small barb and was not yet embedded in the stomach wall. The hook was successfully guided out of the stomach, through the esophagus, and out of the mouth of the turtle. Persephone was recovered from anesthesia and returned to her normal active behavior and excellent appetite shortly after.



Only a few short days after the hook removal procedure, Persephone was returned to Julia Vanaman at SUNY ESF, who fitted her with a brand new radio transmitter device. She was returned to the site where she was found, and when she was placed on the ground, she “took off like a shot” into the water, a very happy and healthy turtle.

The [Janet L. Swanson Wildlife Health Center](http://vet.cornell.edu/hospital/beat/Casestudymapturtleendoscopy.cfm), a service of Cornell University’s Hospital for Animals, is a non-profit donation-run teaching hospital that provides medicine and surgery for native wildlife, and trains veterinary students and graduate veterinarians in wildlife medicine.



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NYSVMC

Get up-to-date on CE at the Fall 2016 New York State Veterinary Conference

Don't miss the 9th annual New York State Fall Veterinary Conference, Friday, September 30th through Sunday, October 2nd, on the Cornell University campus in Ithaca, NY. Co-sponsored by Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine and New York State Veterinary Medical Society (NYSVMS), this annual multi-species, multi-track event has varied lectures and laboratories with up to 22 NYSED/RACE continuing education credits available.

Featured speakers:

- Dr. Doug Mader, an NAVC Speaker of the Year, providing an in-depth program on reptile medicine.

- Dr. Roy Pool, renowned bone pathologist, lecturing on bone pathology of small animals.

Clinical updates on:

- Strangles, seizures in dogs and cats, down cow management, insulin resistance in the diabetic, heat stress in camelids
- Emergency medicine fundamentals for the LVT

Practice management topics including:

- Team engagement

Additionally, for the first time on the east coast, the **4th annual International Donkey Welfare Symposium** will be part of the Fall Conference, featuring cross-group collaboration with donkey enthusiasts and veterinarians.



Sponsored events include **Clinical Investigators' Day** and the **DeeDee Arrison Holistic and Integrative Wellness Series**, which are supported by the College and generous donors. This year the DeeDee Arrison Holistic and Integrative Medicine Series will feature Dr. Barbara Fougere who will speak on herbal medicine and its use in oncology.

Annual festivities will begin Friday evening with the Welcome Reception. On Saturday night, the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine and NYSVMS invite hosts the annual dinner party and awards ceremony at Cornell University's Statler Hotel.

In addition to enjoying Ithaca on this early fall weekend, you will have the opportunity to see the College expansion progress to date. When completed in the fall of 2017, the new atrium will offer a spacious event space that our exhibitors and participants will enjoy.

[Register now on-line](http://www.nysvc.org) at www.nysvc.org or send your registration form to the College of Veterinary Medicine. We look forward to seeing you in Ithaca, September 30 - October 2, 2016!

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Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine launches online life support classes for DVMs

When CPR is done correctly, 50% of dogs and cats that arrest in the peri-anesthetic period survive to discharge. Faculty and researchers at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine have developed new online continuing education courses to provide training on both basic and advanced life support skills. These courses are the only veterinary BLS and ALS courses endorsed by the [Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society](#) and the only courses to provide certification in basic and advanced life support through the [American College of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care](#).

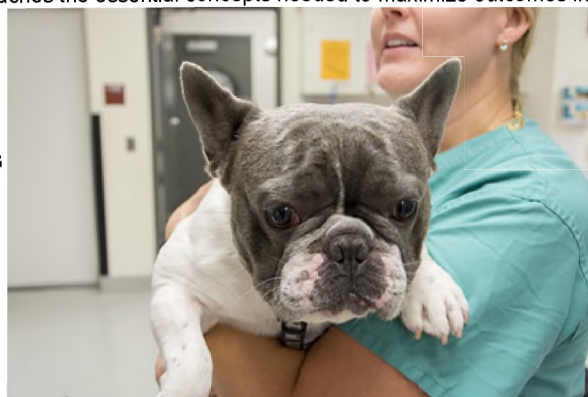
ENROLL NOW

CPR: Basic Life Support (BLS) is the first peer-reviewed small animal CPR course that teaches the essential concepts needed to maximize outcomes in patients with cardiopulmonary arrest. When a cardiopulmonary arrest occurs in your practice, having a well-trained team ready to provide high-quality CPR may be the difference between life and death for your patient.

CPR: Advanced Life Support (ALS) picks up where CPR: Basic Life Support (BLS) finishes, covering the bottom half of the RECOVER veterinary CPR algorithm. Topics include use and interpretation of important monitoring equipment, how to diagnose the ECG arrest rhythm, and drug therapies and other advanced interventions that can improve the likelihood of saving a life.

After completing both courses, you'll have an understanding of the entire CPR algorithm. Cardiopulmonary arrest happens. This course, authored by [Daniel J. Fletcher, PhD, DVM, DACVECC](#), associate professor of emergency and critical care at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, will help prepare your team and maximize the chance of a successful outcome for your patients.

For more information on both ALS and BLS courses, visit the [eCornell course page](#).



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2016 CUHA interns and residents

Our interns and residents are indispensable members of the CUHA clinical team. Please join us in welcoming these new clinicians:

2016 Interns:

Front row, left to right: Dr. Cheryl Chan (small animal emergency and critical care); Dr. Lisa Marie Rodríguez (shelter medicine); Dr. Ashley Schick, Dr. Shoshana Levshin (both with small animal rotating).

Back row, left to right: Dr. Margaret Ewald, Dr. Erin Zepp, Dr. Matthew Milloway (all with small animal rotating); and Dr. Allison Clarke (shelter medicine).

Not pictured: Dr. Cynthia Hopf (exotics, wildlife, zoo) and Dr. Christina Mazulis (dermatology); Dr. Lauren Leudke, Dr. Holly Roessner, Dr. Cynthia Xue (all with Cornell Ruffian Equine Specialists).



2016 CUHA Residents:



Dr. André Escobar
Anesthesia Resident



Dr. Hyun-tae Kim
Clinical Nutrition Resident



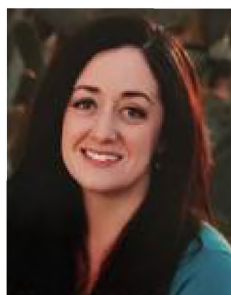
Dr. Kevin Kwong Chee Ng
Dentistry & Oral Surgery
Resident



Dr. Valentin Janvier
Imaging Resident



Dr. Assaf Lerer
Imaging Resident



Dr. Melissa Fenn
LA Medicine Resident



Dr. Stephanie Regan
LA Surgery Resident



Dr. Joshua Henry
Medical Oncology
Resident



Dr. Emil Olsen
Neurology Resident



Dr. Sarah Stephan
Neurology Resident



Dr. Chloe Spertus
Ophthalmology Resident



Dr. Pia Martiny
SA ECC Resident



Dr. Jessica Wallis
SA ECC Resident



Dr. Luis Macho
SA Medicine Resident



Dr. Jennifer Prieto
SA Medicine Resident



Dr. Janis Lapsley
SA Surgery Resident



Dr. Dominick Valenzano
SA Surgery Resident



Dr. Lauri-jo Gamble
Sports Med Rehab
Resident



Dr. Juan Castillo Herrera
Theriogenology Resident



Dr. Francisco Leal-Yepes
Ambul & Prod Med
Resident

We also wish a fond farewell to the CUHA interns and residents who will be moving on to the next stage of their careers:

Residents

Dr. Makoto Asakawa; Small Animal Surgery Resident. Asakawa has recently accepted a position as a Surgeon and Anesthesiologist at the Synergy Animal General Hospital in Saitama Prefecture, Japan.

Dr. Midori Asakawa; Clinical Pathology Resident. Asakawa plans to work as a Clinical and Anatomic Pathologist at the Synergy Animal Hospital in Japan.

Dr. Kristian Ash; Small Animal Surgery Resident. Ash has accepted a position as a surgeon at Peak Veterinary Referral Centre in Burlington Vermont.

Dr. Callum Donnelly; Theriogenology Resident. Donnelly is taking up a position as a resident in Large Animal Internal Medicine and Graduate Studies at the University of California, Davis.

Dr. Michele Edelmann; Ophthalmology Resident & **Chief Resident.** Edelmann has accepted a position as an Ophthalmologist with Garden State Veterinary Specialists in New York City (Staten Island).

Dr. John Lucy '12; Small Animal Medicine Resident. Lucy will be a staff internist at Oradell Animal Hospital in NJ starting in August.

Dr. Emil Olsen; Large Animal Medicine Resident & **Chief Resident.** Olsen will be continuing at the College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University as a Neurology Resident.

Dr. Cindy Piscoya; Medical Oncology Resident. Piscoya will be a Veterinary medical oncologist at Gulf Coast Veterinary Specialists, Houston, TX this summer.

Dr. Diego Angel Portela; Anesthesia Resident. Portela was hired as a Clinical Instructor in Anesthesia at the College of Veterinary Medicine in the Department of Clinical Sciences in July.

Dr. Meghan Slanina; Neurology Resident & **Chief Resident.** Slanina has accepted a position as a Neurologist at MedVet in Cincinnati, OH.

Dr. Sarrah Kaye; Zoological Medicine Resident. Kaye will be leaving to work at the Staten Island Zoo.

Dr. Justin Cardwell; Imaging Resident. Cardwell will be going into a small animal private practice in Vancouver, B.C.

Dr. Robert Campbell; Dentistry and Oral Surgery Resident. Campbell will be going to work in Calgary at a large speciality hospital.

Dr. Daniel Fickle; Dermatology Resident. Fickle will be going to work at a veterinary dermatology and ear clinic in North Carolina.

Interns

Dr. Jodi Boyd; Maddie's Shelter Medicine Intern. Boyd's future plans are unknown at this time.

Dr. Jacob Cawley; Small Animal Medicine and Surgery Intern. Cawley will be going to Colorado State University for a Medical oncology Residency.

Dr. Kristin Freund; Small Animal Medicine and Surgery Intern. Freund has accepted a position as a Surgical Intern at Aspen Meadow Veterinary Specialists in Colorado.

Dr. Katherine Vissio '15; Small Animal Medicine and Surgery Intern. Vissio is going to be an associate at Briar Parch in Ithaca, NY.

Dr. Sarah Robbins; Small Animal Emergency and Critical Care Intern. Robbins will be working at the Veterinary Medical Center of Central New York in Syracuse, NY..

Dr. Pia Martiny; Small Animal Emergency and Critical Care Intern. Martiny will stay on as SA ECC Resident at CUHA.

Dr. Sage Buckner; Ambulatory & Production Medicine Intern. Buckner will be going into a small animal private practice in Vancouver, B.C.