



510 E. 62nd Street, New York, NY 10065 | Phone: 212.838.8100 | Appointments: 212.838.7053

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## Pearls for the Practitioner

Topic: Retrospective Evaluation of Lingual Tumors in Dogs

### *Summary of:*

Retrospective evaluation of lingual tumors in 42 dogs: 1999-2005. Syrcle JA, Bonczynski JJ, Monette S, et al. *J Am Anim Hosp Assoc* 2008; 308-319.

Dr. Jason Syrcle of the Animal Medical Center's Surgery Department has authored a retrospective analysis of tongue tumors which appeared in the November/December 2008 issue of the *Journal of the American Animal Hospital Association*.

In this clinical trial including 42 dogs, 27 or 64% of the tumors were malignant. Results show that these dogs with malignant tumors were 15 times more likely to die of their tumor than dogs with benign tumors. Not surprisingly, surgical excision of larger tumors was less likely to result in a complete resection. Complete resection was associated with a longer survival time and recurrence was associated with a shorter survival time. Median survival time for dogs with benign tumors was >1,607 days and median survival time for dogs with malignant tumors was 286 days.

Surgical excision was the primary treatment for any tumor of the tongue. This study reported on dogs with both partial and subtotal glossectomy. All dogs undergoing a glossectomy were released from the hospital within 6 days of surgery and most dogs were eating well by mouth within 3 days following surgery.

The most common histopathological diagnosis was melanoma in 26% of the 42 cases. The median survival time from dogs with a diagnosis of lingual melanoma was 222 days. Half the dogs with melanoma had distant metastasis at the time of death suggesting additional therapy, such as the DNA melanoma vaccine, is indicated in these dogs.

### **Clinical Implications:**

Dogs with tumors of the tongue can benefit from surgical excision and dogs with benign tumors can have prolonged survival following tumor resection. Complete surgical resection is critical to achieving a long term remission of canine lingual tumors. The complications associated with partial and subtotal glossectomy are minor and this procedure should be considered in all dogs with lingual tumors if it is required to achieve a complete surgical resection. Determining the histological diagnosis using an incisional biopsy will allow presurgical planning appropriate to the tumor type.

The AMC's Surgery Department and Oncology Service are happy to consult with you on management of any tumor. Please click on the following veterinarians for background and contact information.

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- 

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