

Inside Capsules

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A Wag of the Tail

Tail amputations are often indicated for traumatic injury or, less commonly, dermatitis or tumors. Tail amputation often involves a partial caudectomy, although complete excision may be required in select cases.

This retrospective study reviewed surgical outcomes and owner satisfaction of 22 cases of partial caudectomy performed in dogs and cats. The most common indication was for treatment of wounds in 50% of dogs and 83.3% of cats. The amputation was performed in the proximal third of the tail in 36.4% of all cases, and the middle third in 64.6%. There were both minor complications ($n = 4$) and major complications ($n = 3$) in 20 cases that presented for follow-up. Despite this rate, overall owner satisfaction was good or excellent in 91.7% of cases.

Commentary

Partial caudectomy is a common surgical procedure often thought of as easy to perform; however, the complication rate reported in this study was prohibitively high. All complications were related to soft-tissue wound healing; tail skin wounds tend to be highly mobile and vulnerable to contamination, which negatively impacts healing. Detail in this study was lacking regarding the specific nature of postoperative care, which prevents meaningful reflection. However, the use of skin sutures to attain precise apposition (rather than intradermal) or applying some type of coaptation to support the wound may be strategies to consider in future cases.—Jason Bleedorn, DVM, DACVS

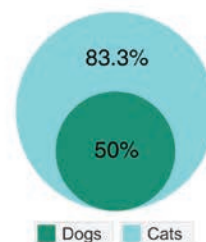
Source

Postoperative complications and owner satisfaction following partial caudectomies: 22 cases (2008-2013). Simons MC, Ben-Amotz R, Popovitch C. *JSAP* 55:509-514, 2014.

CAUDECTOMY OUTCOMES



Caudectomy indicated for wound treatment



Owner satisfaction rate



*No owners reported their experience to be poor

continues