Deradelphous Cephalothoracopagus in Lambs

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Abstract: Deradelphous Cephalothoracopagus is a congenital anomaly which is defined as an abnormality of structure or function present at birth. Conjoined twinning has been reported in most domestic animal species. This paper describes a case of twins were born with 3.7 kg weight and crown-rump length of 54 cm. The twins had two nearly opposite fused bodies without heads that was classified as Cephalothoracopagus. Twins had two bodies and distinct spines, with 4 feet and 4 hands. Intestines and viscera were duplicated. Histological structure of testicular tissue samples showed atrophy and degeneration and in liver samples, hyperemia, necrosis and degeneration were observed. Two distinct pelvises each with one pair of normal hind limbs were also present. Blood samples revealed no hematologic disorder in peripheral blood smears.

Key words: Congenital Defects • Deradelphous • Lamb • Cephalothoracopagus

INTRODUCTION

Congenital defects are abnormalities of structure and function that are distinguishable before birth (prenatally), at birth, or years later. They may induce a single anatomic structure or function, whole system, or parts of several systems [1]. Multiple congenital anomalies often occur together, as an abnormality of one part of the body often leads directly to the malformation of other body parts [2].

Conjoined twins are classified according to the most prominent site of connection, in craniopagus, cephalopagus, thoracopagus, omphalopagus, pygopagus, ischiopagus and rachipagus [3,4].

It has been demonstrated that the majority of human and animal malformations are due to multifactorial etiology [5]. Conjoined twins are imperfectly separated monozygotic twins. It is thought that conjoined twins are more common in cattle than in other domestic animals [1]. In addition, incidences of craniofacial defects are higher in sheep than in other domestic animals [6]. The causes of conjoined twins have still not been clearly elucidated. Congenital defects are induced by genetic or environmental factors (infectious diseases, viruses, drugs, poisonings, plants, mineral salts and vitamin (A, D, E) deficiency), hormonal factors and physical reasons or by their interactions [7].

Cephalothoracopagus is a very rare form of conjoined twins; it is characterized by fused head and thorax but separate spines, limbs and pelvis [8]. The aim of this case report is to present the macroscopic and microscopic anatomical abnormalities in neonatal lambs.

Case History: A 4.5 year-old pregnant ewe belonging to a flock with 185 sheep and 56 goats was referred to the local veterinary clinic located in Lumar city of the Ilam province. Male Lambs was born with 3.7 kg weight and crown-rump length of 54 cm. Twins had two bodies with 4 feet and 4 hands, without head. Lambs had two distinct spines, their intestines and viscera were duplicated. Some peripheral blood smears were taken for blood cell morphology and parasite infestation. In addition, for microscopic investigations, some histo-pathological specimens were obtained from all visceral organs and after staining by Hematoxyline and Eosin stain, the tissues were studied under light microscope. There was no history of congenital abnormalities in the flock.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The twins had two nearly opposite fused bodies without heads that was classified as Cephalothoracopagus. Marked incomplete development...
of the thoracic cavity, together with the respiratory system was present. The thorax appeared to be unique, showed single trachea and lung, respectively (Fig.1), although the abdominal cavity was duplicated. Testicular tissue samples showed atrophy and degeneration and in liver samples, hyperemia, necrosis and degeneration were evident. Two distinct pelvises each with the one pair of normal hind limbs were also observed (Fig.2). Also peripheral blood smears showed no hematologic disorder.

Duplication of the caudal parts of the body is most frequent among the ewe conjoined twin anomalies [9].

The conjoined twinning, on the basis of the fusion of the geometrical plans, was classiﬁed as a cephalopagus according to the classiﬁcation proposed by [4]. Although conjoined twinning has been described in most of the animal species and humans, cephalo thoracopagus results are scarcely reported. A case of cephalo thoracopagus has been previously described in sheep [10].

A case of Cranio thoracopagus (Monocephalus, Thoracopagus, Tetrabrachius) has been recently described in dog [11] and in an ostrich [12]. It means that congenital defects, especially in sheep are probably more common than the reports indicate. In fact it may be due to the method of husbandry prevailing in most sheep [13].

Teratogens including toxic plants, infectious agents, drugs, trace elements deﬁciencies and physical agents such as radiation, hyperthermia and embryo manipulations, are in the scope of possible other factors that may cause this congenital defect [7].

Genetic defects may result in pathological or patho-physiological abnormalities as a result of mutant genes or chromosomal aberrations [14] and particularly recessive genes [13]. However, genetic and environmental factors, or their interaction, are the most common causes [13].

In our studied case, information neither supported inbreeding nor an evidence suggesting that the duplication was environmentally or genetically or a combination of both, induced [8].

REFERENCES