ANOTHER KNOTTY “BEHAVIOUR PROBLEM” UNDONE...

CC is an eight year old graying-black desexed female miniature poodle who shares her human’s bed. CC has recurrent mild skin, dental, anal gland, and ear problems. CC developed intermittent urinary incontinence 8 months ago which is unresponsive to stilboestrol alone. Urinary testing revealed cloudy urine with microscopic blood and white cells but no crystals detected. CC was previously successfully treated with oral Metacam and cephalixin on different occasions, only to have the problem recur.

Because of CC’s close relationship with her human to the extent of sharing the same bed, urinary incontinence is a major problem with the potential to eventually lead to an emotional rift in their relationship.

CC presented to me 8 months after her initial episode of incontinence. Her temperament clearly fitted the profile for stress induced interstitial cystitis. During closer examination I noticed her skin was dry and her coat lacked lustre. I decided to run a T4 as well as a GHP. The GHP was largely NAD with tiny elevations in RBC, Hct and Hb. The T4 was 1 where 14-51 is the normal range!

With a T4 level as low as 1, the diagnosis is unambiguously one of profound hypothyroidism where urinary incontinence is due to muscle weakness. Minor recurrent infections, noise sensitivity, and any anxiety based illness, may be underpinned by hypothyrodisim (not to rule out the additional potential diagnosis of atopy, and the need for further treatment for anxiety).

Where t4 levels are slightly subnormal especially in the presence of physical illness such as dental, anal gland, and ear inflammation, the T4 becomes difficult to interpret due to euthyroid sick syndrome where blood thyroid hormone levels are suppressed due to prolonged physical illness.

The diagnosis of hypothyroidism can become a “chicken and egg” puzzle, but not so in this case.

CC did very well on oroxine combined with stilboestrol. Her incontinence resolved, her coat quality improved, but the other intermittent physical problems persisted.