

Effects of a single preappointment dose of gabapentin on signs of stress in cats during transportation and veterinary examination - PubMed

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Randomized Controlled Trial

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE To determine the effects of oral gabapentin administration prior to veterinary examination on signs of stress in cats. **DESIGN** Randomized, blinded, crossover clinical trial. **ANIMALS** 20 healthy pet cats with a history of fractious behavior or signs of stress during veterinary examination. **PROCEDURES** Cats were scheduled for 2 veterinary visits 1 week apart and randomly assigned to receive a capsule containing 100 mg of gabapentin (13.0 to 29.4 mg/kg [5.9 to 13.4 mg/lb]) or placebo (lactose powder) prior to the first visit and the opposite treatment prior to the second visit. Owners were instructed to administer the assigned capsule orally 90 minutes prior to placing the cat into a carrier and transporting it to the veterinary hospital. Standardized physical examinations and blood pressure readings were performed. Owners assigned a cat stress score during transportation and examination, and the veterinarian assigned a compliance score at the visit. Scores were compared between treatments, controlling for various factors. **RESULTS** Owner-assessed cat

stress scores during transportation and veterinary examination and veterinarian-assessed compliance scores were significantly lower when cats received gabapentin than when they received the placebo. Sedation was a common effect of gabapentin administration, and ataxia, hypersalivation, and vomiting were also reported. All effects resolved within 8 hours after gabapentin administration.

CONCLUSIONS AND CLINICAL RELEVANCE Owners' perception of stress in their cats is a primary reason for failing to seek veterinary care. Results of this study suggested that gabapentin is a safe and effective treatment for cats to help reduce stress and aggression and increase compliance for transportation and veterinary examination.

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