

DYSTOCIA IN A GIRAFFE (*Giraffa camelopardalis*) AT THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN, ALIPORE.

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INTRODUCTION

Dystocia in giraffe has been described by Gijzen (1958) and Grunert *et al* (1988) for different abnormal presentations. Calcutta Zoo had to face this obstetrical problem in one of the giraffes. It was her fourth pregnancy and was the first time veterinary care was necessary for the expulsion of a full grown dead male foetus.

OBSERVATIONS

Signs of parturition was evident on 9.7.94 at about 13.00 hours. The giraffe, named "Uttara", was instantly attended for necessary veterinary care. Following the rupture of the water bag, the forelimb hoof became visible. She was left undisturbed from the visitors and a close vigil was maintained for the smooth progress of delivery. Abdominal movement was suggestive to rhythmic uterine contractions. Assuming it to be a case of "Rigid Cervix", Valethamate bromide (Inj. Epidosin-5 ml. - a TTK product) was administered *ivm* using blow-pipe at 9-15 p.m. to initiate cervical dilatation. Since there was no further improvement in the situation, a second dose of Inj. Epidosin 5 ml. was administered at 23-00 hours. At about 02-00 hours of 10.7.94, pastern joint of the protruded limb was noticed. By 06-30 hours in the morning, a portion of the other forelimb also came out. To avoid possibilities internal infection, antibiotic (Inj. Mikacin - Amikacine sulfate 10 ml.) was administered using dart-gun at about 07-30 hours. At the same time, traction by fixing nooses of rope to the protruded portion of each of the forelimbs were applied through physical manipulation. The tail end of the ropes were pulled by sixteen keepers in a rhythmic interval consistent with that of the abdominal contractions. Finding very little progress, the head of the foetus was searched using a bamboo pole. Since the foetus was in vertex posture, the head was pushed upwards and by simultaneous pull of the traction ropes, a dead foetus came out. It was a full grown male foetus of about two metre tall.

While lateral presentation (Gijzen, 1958) and right fetlock flexion (Grunert *et al*, 1988) have been reported as the cause of dystocia in giraffes, this is probably the first time "Vertex Presentation" is being noticed.

It took only 30 minute for fixing the traction ropes, correcting the Vertex posture and pulling the foetus out. However, the total operation took about twenty hours from the start of parturition process. Maximum period required for a successful normal delivery in giraffes is reported to be three and half hours (Backhaus, 1961).

The course of antibiotic was continued for another four days twice daily against secondary bacterial infection.

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