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Effect of acupuncture treatment on canine semen quality
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Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine (TCVM) has always devoted attention to the treatment of reproductive conditions and ancient texts (1,300 B.C.) quote acupuncture and herbal protocols used for this purpose. Acupuncture is widely employed in assisted reproduction of human beings and anecdotally reported as very effective in treating related conditions.1 Scientific trials and clinical studies have proven the efficacy of acupuncture in treating reproductive diseases also of domestic animals.2,3 The objective of this study was to investigate the effect of acupuncture on quality of canine semen. The study was conducted on four Flat Coated Retriever dogs. For each dog the following protocol was used a) clinical and reproductive exam; b) semen collection and evaluation was performed 3 times at 7-8 day intervals prior to the acupuncture treatment; c) treatment with acupuncture and moxibustion was repeated 3 times at 7-day intervals; d) semen collection and evaluation was repeated 3 times at 10-13 day intervals following acupuncture treatments. The acupuncture protocol consisted of a) clinical exam according to the TCVM; b) treatment with standard TCVM protocol using the 3 acupoints Mingmen, Guanyuan and Shenshu, plus one or two different points specific for each dog depending on the result of the TCVM clinical exam; moxibustion was used to increase the action of the needles. Semen volume, motility, pH, total number of spermatozoa and morphology were analyzed on each sample. Data were analyzed using the SigmaStat 2.03 with a one way ANOVA procedure to examine the variance. Statistical significance was analyzed with a Tukey test with a confidence interval <0.05. The acupuncture treatment increased the percentage of normal sperms (P<0.001) and decreased the percentage of morphologically abnormalities such as head defects, intermediate segment defects, tail defects and presence of proximal and/or distal cytoplasmic droplet (P<0.001). Also, pH values decreased in the dog after the acupuncture treatment. Therefore, in our study acupuncture seems to produce an improvement on canine semen morphology.