*Anamnesis*

**INTRODUCTION**

* In animal disease investigation, the history taking (anamnesis) has a very significant role because animals cannot speak for their ailments and sufferings like human beings. So it depends on the skill of a Veterinarian, how wisely he takes out information of illness of animal from his masters/owners.
* The complete and accurate history helps in making a diagnosis and prognosis.
* There are number of factors which should be included in history taking process, which may influence the disease process in animals.
* Some animals like dog, horse, cow, buffalo and camel are in close contact with their owners, who can speak accurately about their sufferings. But there are some animals like sheep, pig and poultry which are kept in flock and it becomes very difficult for the owner to identify the affected animal and he suffers from lack of knowledge about some of the aspects of disease process like exact time of start of disease.

**METHOD OF ANAMNESIS**

* It is the wiseness of the Veterinarian that he should not be misled by the animal owners. By making cross questions, Veterinarian should satisfy himself regarding the story of illness of animal revealed by owner. It has been observed during the course of investigation that some owners/farmers do not yield exact information and hide some aspects which ultimately gives a misleading picture of disease. Sometimes this occurs unknowingly or unwillingly.
* During an investigation of a malicious poisoning, it has been observed that the animals are kept in a closed housing and properly looked after all the time as revealed by owners. However, even then the mortality occurred in animals due to poisoning.
* On meticulous examination it has been found that the owners left the animals alone in the morning hours.
* This is the time for one goes out for urination and defecation and it is an usual practice in the villages that the persons go a long distance for lavatory around *½* to 1 km from normal place of residence.
* During this period, the persons having mollified intentions give the poisonous baits to animals, hence the mortality occurs.
* Therefore, the anamnesis is a key factor to make an accurate diagnosis of animal disease. It not only helps in diagnosis possibilities but also probabilities.
* An accurate history may indicate about the system involved which requires special attention for examination.
* The Veterinarian should handle the animal owners with diplomacy and tactfulness. He should avoid to use technical terminology as most of the owners/farmers are not able to understand the technical words.
* It is however, preferred to use local language when asking questions to animal attendants.
* The Veterinarian should ask the question in a friendly and cordial atmosphere and should avoid arguments.
* It has been observed during disease investigation that some animal owners hesitate in revealing accurate history so it is very important to ask them in such a way that they should not feel guilty.
* In rural areas of developing countries like India, the animals are looked after by the female members of the family.
* As they are not much educated, they even can not understand Hindi. Therefore, the use of local language is always advisable by the Veterinarians, if the Veterinarian is not well versed with local language of that area, he can take the help of his stock assistants/ compounders/attendants or any other person from village who knows both local language and Hindi/English and may act as translator between owner and the animal doctor.
* Apparently, such things look minor or of low importance but they may have a far reaching effect on confirmatory diagnosis.
* It should be kept in mind that Veterinarian should try to separate the owner’s observations from his own interpretations.
* Whenever the Veterinarian is misled by the anamnesis, the careful clinical and laboratory examination is essential in such cases.
* If the anamnesis does not confirm the results of examination, it should be accepted with utmost care/attention to avoid any misconception.
* Veterinarian must know the right questions to ask from animal owners. This of course comes with experience and familiarity with disease investigation.
* The examiner should establish the sequence of events in the animal disease process as the owner describes the symptoms in a layman language and without any chronology.
* It is the task of Veterinarian to set routine questions including patient data, previous illness history about present illness, herd position, previous treatments, vaccination, control and preventive measures adopted, mortality and morbidity rates, management, nutrition and environment.
* The Veterinarian should design a proforma for history and observation made during the examination of animal. A set proforma used by a Veterinarian not only gives the set of questions to be asked to owners but also maintains homogenesity in the data recording which is very much useful for a retrospective as well as perspective studies.
* A standard design of proforma for anamnesis and Veterinarian’s observations is given here which can be followed for routine examination of animal and diagnosis. While filling the proforma, Veterinarian should consider following points.

**ANIMAL DATA**

* Veterinarian should include the owner’s name and address along with species, breed, sex, age, name and number of animal, identification and color marks in the proforma.
* There should be proper identification of the animal, which is not only important for accurate diagnosis but also necessary in veterolegal cases.

**PREVIOUS ILLNESS**

* In this column one should record the previous suffering of animal, if any, along with treatment given and preventive and control measures adopted.
* This information is very useful in establishing the diagnosis. It will indicate whether the animal is suffering from same disease or new one.
* It should also be mentioned that what type of drugs animal received during previous illness, which is particularly useful in drug related diseases.
* The previous vaccinations, if any, should be included in this part of proforma.
* It is pertinent to have the clinical signs, clinical pathology, postmortem lesions and diagnosis of previous illness of the animals.
* This information will be helpful in determining the disease diagnosis.

**PRESENT DISEASE**

* The Veterinarian should see a typical case of the disease presently going on in animals and ask the questions to farmer about the onset and progress of disease.
* It should be kept in mind that not all the cases will exhibit typical symptoms of disease, so in such cases it is more important to select a typical case and enquire about the sequence of events of the disease process.
* The owner’s observations about onset of the disease mostly start when animal becomes anorexic or its milk production or draught capacity reduced.
* In many diseases, the early signs are missed by owners therefore one has to be very careful regarding onset of disease in animals.
* It is also advisable to examine few typical cases along with other in contact animals which are apparently normal.
* In some diseases, fever lasts 1-2 days, then other signs appear. If fever was missed, it will become a confused state for Veterinarian who may arrive to a wrong diagnosis.
* The behavior of animals, feeding, watering, production, growth, respiration, defecation, urination, sweating, activity, gait, posture, voice, and odour should be noted.
* After recording the history on general aspects, one should ask the owner about total number of animals kept, number of animals affected from present disease and number of animals died due to disease to calculate morbidity, mortality and case fatality rates.
* ***Morbidity rate*** is the proportions of affected animals which can be calculated by dividing the number of affected animals by total number of animals kept at the farm and is expressed in percent.
* The total number of dead animals divided by total number of animals kept at farm is the ***mortality rate*** which is also expressed in percent.
* The ***case fatality rate*** is calculated by dividing the number of animals died due to disease by number of animals affected with same disease and is expressed in percent.
* The morbidity, mortality and case fatality rates indicate about the type of disease involved as in contagious diseases, the morbidity rate is very high because of rapid transmission while in noninfectious diseases the morbidity rate is low.
* The Veterinarian should ask the owner about treatments given to animals and its response. The vaccination and/or other control measures taken by the owners to contain the disease should be noted.
* After recording the animal data on present disease, one should see the management aspect, it includes nutrition, feed and fodder, status of toxins in feeds, e.g. aflatoxins, pasture grazing or stall feeding, climate, housing, drainage of water, sources of water supply and ventilation in animal houses, which should be recorded properly.
* Besides, one should also know about the environmental conditions which includes vegetation, soil type, composition of soil, population density, environmental temperature, moisture, prevalence of insects, fauna and flora and status of pollution.
* At certain places soil is deficient in certain minerals and trace elements which may give rise to clinical illness.
* Similarly, the environmental pollution may lead to immunopathological / immunotoxicological diseases, e.g. immunosuppression, glomerulonephritis in animals while improper disposal of waste and unhygienic conditions at farm may be responsible for occurrence of an epidemic of infectious disease.
* Prevalence of flies and insects may cause outbreaks of hemoprotozoan diseases and arboviral infections.
* The presence of ticks in poultry housing is indicative of the presence of spirochetosis in flock.

**OBSERVATIONS OF THE VETERINARIAN**

* Apart from the history revealed by the owners, Veterinarian should make his own assessment regarding the occurrence of disease, sequence of disease process, clinical signs and managemental conditions.
* The Veterinarian should not wholly depend on the revelations of the owners. He must take his own observation based on his own eyewitness facts. This is particularly important in case of toxic conditions of malicious nature in animals. For example, if animal suffers from fever, then Veterinarian should himself take the temperature of affected as well as normal animals by thermometer.
* The lesions and other clinical signs, which owner is not able to describe, should also be taken into account by the Veterinarian. By his actions, Veterinarian should establish his faith in the owners/farmers.
* He should talk with them preferably in local language or use local versions of the technical terms which not only shows the affection but also very useful for accurate anamnesis. It is well said that “anamnesis is a base line for accurate diagnosis of disease”.

Animal Examination Report\*

Case no\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Owner’s name and address\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Animal species\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_breed\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Sex\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Animal no. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Identification marks\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Age of Animal\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date of start of illness\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Previous history (previous illness, treatment, control measures, etc.)

Present history (clinical signs, lesions, behaviour of animal, nutrition, management,environment, morbidity, mortality).

Observations of the Veterinarians (clinical signs, lesions and tentative diagnosis).

Signature of owner

Signature of Veterinarian

* One copy of this must be accompanied with the forwarding of clinical specimens to laboratory investigations.