



"Clover" - Cat with Torn Knee Ligaments



Clover

Knee or stifle injuries are very common both in humans and domestic pets.

In humans cranial cruciate ligament injuries are most often associated with sport - principally football, rugby and ski-ing. These are usually always sudden in onset and are both extremely painful and debilitating.

In dogs, there is a large group of patients where the cruciate ligament appears to deteriorate over a much longer time period and is not associated with any particularly serious traumatic event. The exact cause or pathogenesis of this type of "canine cruciate ligament disease" remains a hot topic for debate in the bars at the veterinary orthopaedic conferences.

Cats, however, remain very similar to humans with this type of injury. Whilst I have yet to document that one of my feline patients returned from a ski-ing holiday in crutches the sudden onset painful knee associated with an athletic event is typical.

Identifying which particular episode resulted in the injury is always problematic since most feline patients have been "out for the day" when the accident occurred. One can only guess that whilst attempting to leap over an obstacle the affected leg became trapped in some way. The weight of the patient then twists with the affected limb remaining stationary resulting in a torn ligament.

Given the severity of damage to all the ligaments in "Clover's" left knee I can only surmise that she was attempting a mighty leap when her leg became trapped. Fortunately, our ability to reconstruct damaged joints appears to have improved over the years.

Using a nylon prosthesis and a metal crimp the stability of the knee can be successfully restored. Not for the first time have Clover's owners been glad of pet health insurance! It shouldn't be too long now before "Clover" is leaping around on her daily outings although I have advised her to give up any thoughts of playing football or ski-ing!

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