Veterinary Science
Preparatory Training for the Veterinary Assistant
Floron C. Faries, Jr., DVM, MS
Pain Recognition

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Objectives

- Define pain
- Discuss classifications of physiological pain
- Describe behavioral signs that indicate pain
- Describe the physiological response to pain
- Discuss non-chemical procedures to assist a patient in possible pain
Definition of Pain

- Unpleasant sensory experience
- Unpleasant emotional experience
- Associated with actual tissue damage
- Associated with potential tissue damage
- Recognize the clinical symptoms
Classifications of Physiological Pain

- Noiceptive
  - Perception (conscious recognition) of painful sensation
    - Somatic (body) pain
    - Visceral (organ) pain
  - General anesthesia prevents

- Neuropathic
  - Direct damage to nerves or spinal cord
  - General anesthesia does not stop
Behavioral Signs that Indicate Pain

- Vocalization
- Silence
- Guarding
- Facial expressions
- Self-mutilation
- Muscle rigidity
- Muscle weakness
- Restlessness
- Reluctance to move
- Personality changes
- Dullness
- Loss in food/water intake
- Failure to groom

“Pain Recognition”
Physiological Response to Pain

- Cardio-pulmonary changes
  - Increased heart rate, blood pressure, respiratory rate
  - Irregular heart beats
  - Shallow breathing
  - Pale mucous membranes
- Dilated pupils
- Increased salivation
- Elevated blood sugar

“Pain Recognition”
Degrees of Pain

- Mild pain
- Moderate pain
- Severe pain
  - Vocalization
  - Self-mutilation
  - Violent thrashing
Chemical Procedures to Reduce Pain

- Drugs to reduce the pathological pain
Non-chemical Procedures to Reduce Pain

- External heat to warm animal
  - Blankets and pads
  - Bedding
  - Intravenous fluid warmers
- Quiet room
- Dimmed lighting
- Human touch
- Nursing care