



HYPER-REACTIVITY IN MILITARY WORKING DOGS: A REPORT OF TWO CASES



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ARMY POLICE BATTALION

- MWD
 - Protection
 - Narcotic detection
 - Explosive detection
- Kenneled
- Work schedules
 - Physical activities → 30min – 2d/week
 - Obedience and bond work → 20-30min – 3d/week
 - Specific work → 20-30min – 3-4d/week
- 1,5-2 years → dogs are mission ready (no certification)



HYPER-REACTIVITY

- behavioral problem characterized by extreme response to external stimuli
- difficulties in training programs of military working dogs



CASE REPORT

- one 7 y.o. Labrador Retriever (LR) → Snow
- one 3 y.o. Malinois Belgian Shepherd (MBS) → Selva
- unneutered males,
- reported with poor performance
 - exacerbated reactions to environment
 - Selva had history of circling behavior and an episode of redirected aggressiveness.



VETERINARY EVALUATION

- Physical exam → normal
- Veterinary behaviorist
 - Similar cases
 - Very high arousal
 - High exploration of the environment
 - High response to any stimulus
 - Some anxiety signs
- Laboratory parameters (CBC, TSH and T4) → normal

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Improvement of the handlers' knowledge on behavior;

2. Environmental enrichment:

- Food toys
- Increment in exercise load

3. Behavior modification:

- Maximum reduction of confrontational techniques (LIMA protocol)

4. Medical therapy:

- Pheromone (Adaptil®)
- Fluoxetine therapy (1mg/kg, SID)



IMPROVEMENT OF THE HANDLERS' KNOWLEDGE ON BEHAVIOR

Body Language of Fear in Dogs



Slight Cowering



Major Cowering

More Subtle Signs of Fear & Anxiety



Licking Lips
when no food nearby



Panting
when not hot or thirsty



Brows Furrowed, Ears to Side



Moving in Slow Motion
walking slow on floor



Acting Sleepy or Yawning
when they shouldn't be tired



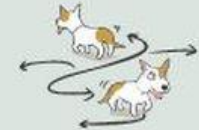
Hypervigilant
looking in many directions



Suddenly Won't Eat
but was hungry earlier



Moving Away



Pacing

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ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT



BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION



MEDICAL THERAPY



RESULTS

- 15 days
 - Improvements in HR sings and performance
- 4 months
 - performance returned to normal → medications were discontinued

DISCUSSION

- Occurrence of Hyper-reactivity in MWD
 - Few reports of behavioral problems in MWD
- If diagnosed and treated possibly brings good prognosis of returning to work
- Difficulty of diagnosis
 - Lack of qualified professional
 - Denomination and definition in the literature
- Behavioral veterinary medicine seems to provide adequate tools for handling these MWD cases

DISCUSSION

- Prevention
 - Animal welfare programs for MWD
- Army Health School
 - Research Project
 - Health and welfare of MWD
 - Normatization of animal welfare in the Brazilian Army



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