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Ataxia, dysmetria, tremor. Cerebellar diseases.

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Abstract

Diseases affecting the cerebellum typically cause ataxia, coupled with dysmetria and tremor. Dysmetria is a condition in which there is improper measuring of distance in muscular acts; hypermetria is overreaching (overstepping) and hypometria is underreaching (understepping). Tremor refers to an involuntary, rhythmic, oscillatory movement of a body part. The tremor of cerebellar disease typically is exaggerated by goal-oriented movements (intention tremor). Cerebellar lesions also often cause loss of the menace response, despite the presence of normal vision. The anatomic basis for this phenomenon is obscure. The principal disease affecting the cerebellum in cats is cerebellar hypoplasia due to in utero infection with the panleukopenia virus. This disease will be discussed here. Neurologic signs of cerebellar involvement also may be seen in association with those diseases that affect the CNS multifocally. In these cats, there may be additional signs indicating involvement of other anatomic areas or the cerebellar deficits may occur alone (see discussion of multifocal diseases in Multiple Neurologic Deficits: Inflammatory Diseases [page 426] and Multiple Neurologic Deficits: Noninfectious Diseases [page 440]).

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