Evaluation of Alopecia in Nonhuman Primates

Last Updated 15 February 2017

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1. **Background**

Alopecia is a common problem in captive, non-human primates (NHP). Alopecia is manifested as hair loss without any clinical changes at the skin surface. This condition can be a result of various causes including clinical, environmental, or behavioral factors. Due to the wide variety of clinical presentations, assessing this condition can be challenging. Potential clinical causes of alopecia include ectoparasites, allergic disease, autoimmune disease, endocrine disease, nutritional deficiencies or imbalances, aging, stress, or others (see Appendix B). Evaluation of alopecia is subjective; therefore, a standardized method needs to be implemented. The intent of this scoring schematic is to aid in consistency of diagnosis and monitoring changes over time.

2. **Responsibility**

1. Veterinary Resident
   1. Review NHP records and previous alopecia form prior to exam.
   2. Complete alopecia form and place in the medical record.
   3. Develop a plan with faculty based on clinical assessment.

3. **Procedures**

1. **Frequency**
   1. Assess alopecia in each primate every 3 months using the "Alopecia Form" (see Appendix A)

2. **Using the Alopecia Form**
   1. The body is divided into 12 zones (A through L). Eleven of the twelve zones each account for approximately 9% of the body surface. The twelfth zone, zone L which represents the tail, accounts for approximately 1%. Thus, when considered together, all zones account for 100% of the body surface.
   2. Quantify and record the percentage of alopecia present within each zone on the score chart. A table is provided on the right side of the form that includes calculated values corresponding to the whole body percentage. Place this value directly into the score chart. Once all zones have been evaluated, sum the values to determine the total percent of the body affected by alopecia.
   3. After evaluating each zone, shade in the corresponding ALOPECIC area on the body map. This will aid in the monitoring of specific alopecic areas.
   4. For each zone, assign a description score to further characterize the degree of alopecia/lack of alopecia. Note that a description score should be assigned to every zone.

3. **Treatment**

1. If the alopecia score in whole body or specific zones is higher than it was during the previous examination, use Appendix B as a reference for further diagnosis and treatment.
2. If alopecia is caused by psychological factors based on clinical findings, develop a plan with input from faculty for each individual case in accordance with the Primate Environmental Enrichment Program (PEEP).
3. Notify the lab manager and husbandry responsible for the care of the animals of this plan.

4. **Documentation**

1. Write the medical assessment and plan associated with the alopecia examination findings on the treatment and observation sheet in the NHP’s medical record.
2. Place the "Alopecia Form" on the right side of the patient’s medical record.

4. **Related Documents**

1. Environmental Enrichment For Nonhuman Primates

5. **Appendices**

1. Appendix A: Alopecia Form
2. Appendix B: Identifying Possible Causes of Alopecia in Nonhuman Primates
6. References


*Contact investigators first before administering any treatment or environmental enrichment*