Global Commentary
This study used the same population of dogs reported in a previous paper on the efficacy of spironolactone in dogs with MMVD. Both studies suggest the efficacy and safety of spironolactone in heart failure from MMVD. Because spironolactone is a mild diuretic, clinical benefit can be difficult to identify in dogs treated with multiple CHF drugs. Because spironolactone increases longevity, its safety profile is critical. A study of spironolactone in cats suggested that a third of cats may develop severe facial ulcerative dermatitis, raising concerns about safety in dogs. However, this report demonstrated no increased risk of hyperkalemia or renal dysfunction in dogs.

In Europe, veterinarians are required to use the licensed product under the CASCADE legislation. Globally, less expensive generic forms may be available.

Simon Swift, MA, VetMB, CertSAC, DECVIM-CA (Cardiology), MRCVS

Source


Conventional therapy for congestive heart failure (CHF) includes ACE inhibitors, furosemide, and sometimes digoxin. Spironolactone, in addition to conventional therapy, has been shown to decrease the risk for cardiac-related deaths or severe worsening in dogs with myxomatous mitral valve disease (MMVD) by 55%; however, long-term safety is not known. In this study, dogs received either spironolactone (n = 95) or placebo (n = 101) with conventional therapy. Safety was compared using frequency of adverse events (eg, cardiac deaths, renal disease) and changes in serum sodium, potassium, urea, and creatinine concentrations. The number of adverse events (eg, anorexia or lethargy, bronchitis or tracheitis, and vomiting or diarrhea) in conventionally and spironolactone-treated groups was similar (208 and 188, respectively). No specific trend was noted for serum variables and the number of out-of-range variables was similar. There were significantly more deaths in conventional therapy because of cardiac or renal disease or both. Dogs receiving spironolactone were not at higher risk for adverse events, death by cardiac or renal disease, or hyperkalemia or azotemia.

Commentary
Recently, spironolactone has been recognized as a valuable therapy for CHF in dogs because of its aldosterone antagonist and antifibrotic effects. Spironolactone is also useful for ascites secondary to portal hypertension. The usefulness of spironolactone for CHF in cats is yet to be elucidated. Reported adverse effects of spironolactone in cats include facial dermatitis (specifically in Maine coon cats); however, I have not seen this effect, even after three years in cat-only practice.—Natasha Evans, BVSc(hons), BSc(Vet), MACVSc (Small Animal Medicine)