Calcified Cat Paws & Chronic Renal Failure

In a retrospective study of five client-owned cats with soft tissue mineralization of interdigital spaces and footpads, paw disease was the primary presenting sign in three. The other two were presented for progressive weight loss, anorexia, and vomiting, and paw lesions were observed during physical examination. Paw nodules ranged in size from a few millimeters to 2 centimeters and were firm on palpation. A white-to-gray, pasty material drained from the palmar or plantar side in several of the lesions, but not from the small, intact nodules in one cat. In all cases, cytologic examination of the lesions showed calcinosis; laboratory findings were suggestive of chronic renal failure; and the solubility product (calcium x phosphorus) was above 70. Results agreed with two previous case reports of paw calcification in cats, suggesting a metastatic pathogenesis and a correlation between paw mineralization and renal failure.

COMMENTARY: Although relatively uncommon, veterinarians should be aware that caseous interdigital lesions in cats may represent an otherwise-unrecognized manifestation of chronic renal failure. — David F. Senior, BVSc, Diplomate ACVIM & ECVIM