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Application for Patellar Luxation Database

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Classification

A method of classifying the degree of luxation and bony deformity is useful for diagnosis, and can be applied to either medial or lateral luxations by reversing the medial-lateral directional references. The position of the patella can most easily be palpated by starting at the tibial tubercle and working proximally along the patellar ligament to the patella.

Grade 1

The patella easily luxates manually at full extension of the stifle joint, but returns to the trochlea when released. No crepitation is apparent. The medial, or very occasionally, lateral deviation of the tibial crest (with lateral luxation of the patella) is only minimal, and there is very slight rotation of the tibia. Flexion and extension of the stifle joint is in a straight line with no abduction of the hock.

Grade 2

There is frequent patellar luxation which, in some cases, becomes more or less permanent. The limb is sometimes carried, although weight bearing routinely occurs with the stifle remaining slightly flexed.

As much as 30 degrees of medial tibial torsion and a slight medial deviation of the tibial crest may exist. When the patella is resting medially the hock is slightly abducted. If the condition is bilateral, more weight is thrown onto the forelimbs.

Many cases in this grade live with the conditional reasonably well for many years, but the constant luxation of the patella over the medial lip of the trochlea causes erosion of the articulating surface of the patella and also the proximal area of the medial lip. This results in creptitation becoming apparent when the patella is luxated manually.

Grade 3

The patella is permanently luxated with torsion of the tibia and deviation of the tibial crest of between 30 degrees and 50 degrees from the cranial/caudal plane. Although the luxation is not intermittent, many animals use the limb with the stifle held in a semi-flexed position. Flexion and extension of the joint causes abduction and adduction of the hock. The trochlea is very shallow or even flattened.

Grade 4

The tibia is medially twisted and the tibial crest may show further deviation medially with the result that it lies 50 degrees to 90 degrees from the cranial/caudal plane.

The patella is permanently luxated. The patella lies just above the medial condyle and a space can be palpated between the patellar ligament and the distal end of the femur. The trochlea is absent or even convex.

The limb is carried, or the animal moves in a crouched position, with the limb partly flexed.