Distemper in a Ferret

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Signalment

- 4 year old, male castrated ferret
- Rescue case with foot lesions and a mucocutaneous rash
- Multiple samples of skin and foot pads submitted by referring veterinarian
Morphological Diagnosis

Food pad, Diffuse epidermal hyperplasia with marked hyperkeratotic parakeratosis, syncytia formation and intralesional inclusion bodies
Canine Distemper Virus

- Disease in various mustelids:
  - mink, ferret, weasel, skunk, badger, otter, martin
- Most serious disease in ferrets, 100% fatal
- Virus spread by aerosolization
- Replicates in respiratory epithelium and regional lymph nodes, viremia within 4-5 days
- Lesions similar to those in dogs:
  - Limited to cutaneous and ocular alterations, oculonasal discharge, hyperkeratosis of the planum nasale and footpads, and a papular rash (starts on the chin, progresses to generalized form)
  - Catarrhal to mucopurulent rhinitis, tracheitis and bronchitis, dyspnea and diarrhea
  - Later neurologic signs of myoclonus, paresis and convulsions, death
Canine Distemper

- **Treatment:** NONE
- **Prevention:**
  - **Fervac-D**
    - High rate of anaphylaxis
    - Effective?
  - **Galaxy-D**
    - Effective
    - High titers
    - Extralabel Use
  - **Purevax**
    - Recombinant canarypox
    - HA and F antigens
References


