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Evaluation of the Efficacy of *Crataegus oxyacantha* in Dogs with Early-Stage Heart Failure

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Abstract

Background: Myxomatous mitral valve disease (MMVD) is the most common cardiopathy in middle-aged dogs. When the dog is asymptomatic and has an enlarged left atrium, treatment is beneficial; however, some allopathic drugs are very costly and may produce side effects. To extend the duration of this asymptomatic phase, complementary therapies such as herbal medicine and homeopathy are available. Although herbal therapy with extract of *Crataegus oxyacantha* is beneficial, there is a risk of adverse reactions-unlike with homeopathy, where the risk is minimized with the administration of ultra-diluted doses.

Objective: This study evaluated the efficacy of *Crataegus oxyacantha*, as mother tincture (MT) and in 6 cH homeopathic formulation, in treating the initial phase of heart failure due to MMVD in a veterinary clinic setting.

Methods: A total of 30 dogs with MMVD, 7 years or older and weighing up to 10 kg, were randomized into three groups as follows: *Crataegus* 6 cH, *Crataegus* MT, and hydroalcoholic solution (placebo). Animals were evaluated through echocardiography parameters, laboratory blood tests, and systolic blood pressure (SBP) measurements at 30, 60, 90, and 120 days after initiation of therapy, for statistical analysis and monitoring of the blinded study.

Results: Patients who received *Crataegus* 6 cH showed a reduction in SBP 60 days after treatment, while those receiving *Crataegus* MT exhibited a reduction 90 days after the therapy was initiated. There was a significant linear regression when evaluating the effect of treatment with *Crataegus* 6 cH on SBP measurements over the evaluation intervals (linear equation: $SBP = 176.57 \text{ mm Hg} - 0.21x$, where x represents days of treatment). There was an increase in both fractional shortening and isovolumetric relaxation time for those patients receiving the homeopathic formulation.

Conclusions: Therapy with *Crataegus* was beneficial for hypertensive and cardiopathic dogs with MMVD, extending the duration of the asymptomatic phase. The reduction in SBP occurred more swiftly in the 6 cH group than in the MT-treated dogs.

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