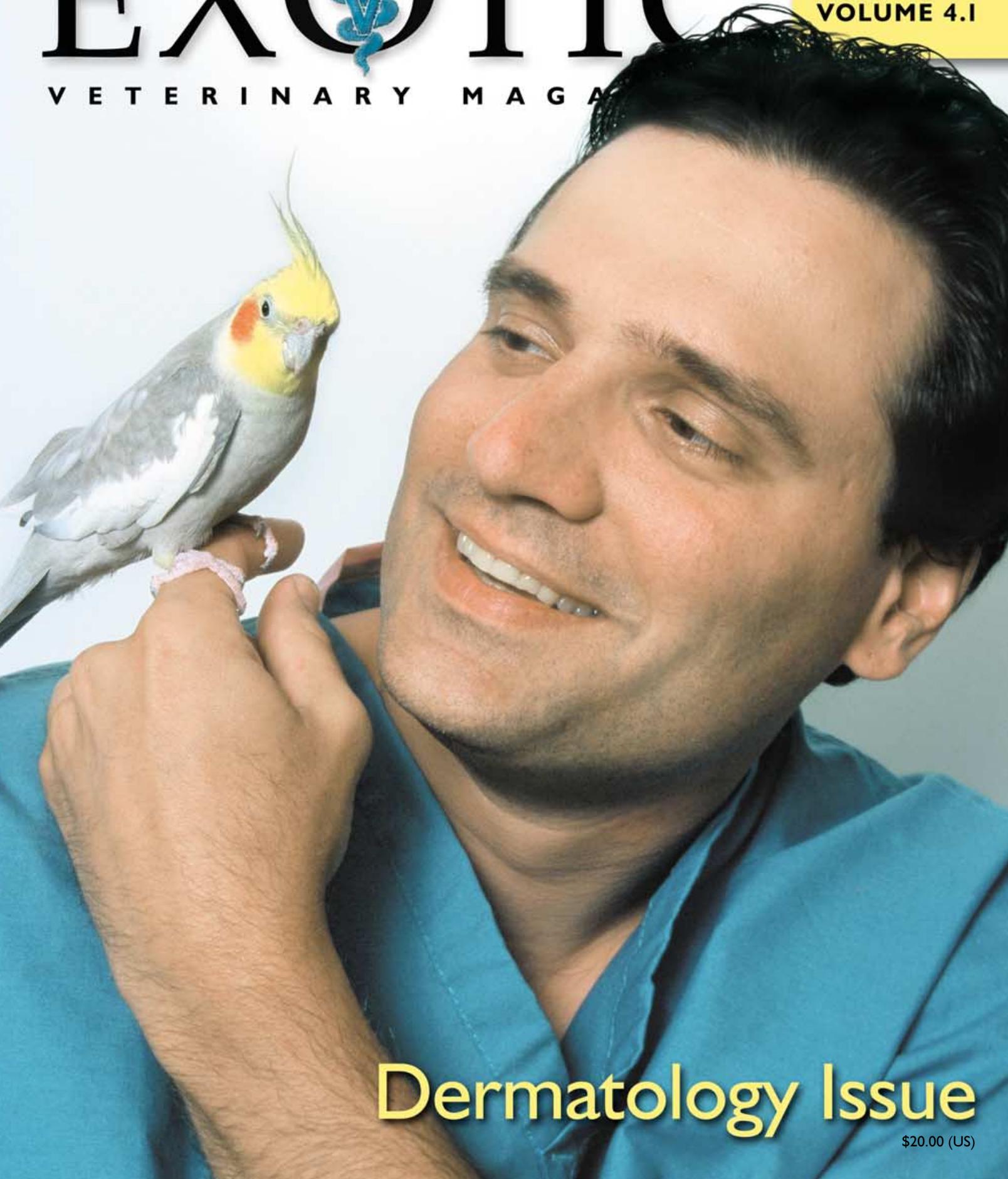


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INCISOR EXTRACTION TO RESOLVE CLINICAL SIGNS OF ODONTOMA IN A PRAIRIE DOG

Vittorio Capello, DVM

A 2-year-old female prairie dog (*Cynomys ludovicianus*) presented with clinical signs of depression, anorexia, dyspnea, and sneezing. History revealed that another veterinarian had twice trimmed the lower incisors.



On clinical examination, the prairie dog was active, alert and in fair condition, even though both upper incisors were fractured at the gum level.



On the lateral skull radiograph, the apex of the upper incisors appeared irregular and hyperplastic (arrows); this reduced the size of the nasal cavity (red lines) and limited the air flow, resulting in dyspnea and sneezing. These radiographic abnormalities, in addition to the presence of the typical nodular hard palate lesion, increased the suspicion of odontoma.

A complete extraction of the incisor teeth, as described in rabbits, was successfully performed. Anesthesia was maintained by isoflurane via face mask. Tracheal intubation or tracheostomy was not needed in this patient. No tooth fractures occurred, even though the procedure was much

more difficult than in rabbits due to both the anatomic and pathologic differences.

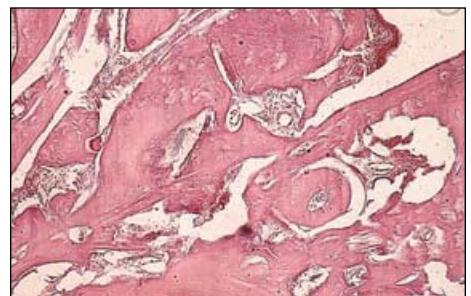


The apex of the right upper incisor appeared larger than normal due to hyperplasia of both hard and soft tissues.



A postoperative skull radiograph showed that the air passage was much improved after the extraction (red lines).

Antibiotic therapy (enrofloxacin 5 mg/kg IM q12h injected deeply in the caudal muscles of the thigh) and syringe-feeding were instituted, but the prairie dog started to eat on its own by the fifth day following surgery. Sneezing and a limited discharge persisted for 4 days.



Histopathologic findings revealed the presence of a complex odontoma (100x).



The prairie dog is alive and in good health 2 years following the surgery, and clinical signs have not recurred.

Odontomas in captive prairie dogs are believed to be a consequence of repeated trauma, fractures or trimming of incisors. Fractures occur frequently if this rodent species is housed in a small-sized wire cage where it continually chews on the wires.

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