

Long-term outcome of gonadectomy performed at an early age or traditional age in dogs

Lisa M. Howe, DVM, PhD, DACVS; Margaret R. Slater, DVM, PhD; Harry W. Boothe, DVM, MS, DACVS; H. Phil Hobson, DVM, MS, DACVS; Jennifer L. Holcom, BS; Angela C. Spann, BS*

Abstract

Objective—To determine long-term results and complications of gonadectomy performed at an early age (prepubertal) or at the traditional age in dogs.

Design—Cohort study.

Animals—269 dogs from animal shelters.

Procedure—Dogs that underwent gonadectomy were allotted to 2 groups on the basis of estimated age at surgery (traditional age, ≥ 24 weeks old; prepubertal, < 24 weeks old). Adoptive owner information was obtained from shelter records, and telephone interviews were conducted with owners to determine physical or behavioral problems observed in the dogs since adoption. Follow-up information was obtained from attending veterinarians for dogs with complex problems or when owners were uncertain regarding the exact nature of their dog's problem.

Results—Prepubertal gonadectomy did not result in an increased incidence of behavioral problems or problems associated with any body system, compared with traditional-age gonadectomy, during a median follow-up period of 48 months after gonadectomy. Rate of retention in the original adoptive household was the same for dogs that underwent prepubertal gonadectomy as those that underwent traditional-age gonadectomy. Infectious diseases, however, were more common in dogs that underwent prepubertal gonadectomy.

Conclusions and Clinical Implications—With the exception of infectious diseases, prepubertal gonadectomy may be safely performed in dogs without concern for increased incidence of physical or behavioral problems during at least a 4-year period after gonadectomy. (*J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2001;218:217-221)

*Affiliations:

From the Departments of Small Animal Medicine and Surgery (Howe, Boothe, Hobson, Holcom, Spann) and Veterinary Anatomy and Public Health (Slater), College of Veterinary Medicine, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-4474.

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