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Clinical Communication

Fatal levamisole toxicosis of captive kiwi (*Apteryx mantelli*)

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Abstract

CASE HISTORY: Nine of 24 captive kiwi treated with oral levamisole at a dose between 25–43 mg/kg showed signs of respiratory distress. Six died within 4 h of treatment and the remaining three made a full recovery within 24 h.

CLINICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL FINDINGS: Within 3–4 h of treatment, the affected birds had an elevated respiratory rate, mucoid nasal discharge and rapidly became comatose. Post mortem examination revealed accumulation of thick mucus in the oral cavity and trachea. There was severe pulmonary congestion and oedema and early bronchopneumonia in the lungs of five of the birds. In two birds, there was acute hepatic degeneration and necrosis and one bird had acute pancreatic degeneration and necrosis.

DIAGNOSIS: Acute levamisole toxicity.

CLINICAL RELEVANCE: Kiwi were acutely sensitive to levamisole toxicity at doses that are well within the safe range for domestic poultry. Levamisole should not be used as an anthelmintic in kiwi.

KEY WORDS:

Apterygiformes

kiwi

pulmonary oedema

anthelmintic

toxicity

levamisole

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