

CRYOSURGERY FOR ULCERATED WOUND IN A RETICULATED PYTHON

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Cryosurgery is used to treat a variety of cancerous and non-cancerous diseases in dogs, horses and cats (Krahwinkel *et al.*, 1976). This paper describes a successful treatment of an ulcerated wound at the tip of the tail of a Reticulated Python.

A Reticulated Python at Nandankanan Zoo developed a wound at the tip of its tail during a fight with another python. It was treated with Genticyn drops after the sensitivity test q.i.d. for 10 days with no improvement (Fig. 1). It was decided to treat the lesion by cryosurgery. After restraining the python physically, cryo application was done by swab method as described by Nath *et al.* (2002) in a tiger cub for the treatment of perianal fistula. No topical antibiotic was applied on the site. The wound completely healed in two weeks.

In the present case, amputation and suturing of the tail wound was not considered because of prevention of regeneration in reptiles as advised by Zwart (1986). In his opinion, infected traumatic wounds on the tail may lead to osteomyelitis and even result in the infection of the spinal cord requiring amputation of the tail in these cases. The wound was treated with liquid nitrogen after physically restraining the python by five persons to avoid any body constriction. Cryo application was done without any local anaesthesia as suggested by Farris *et al.* (1975) who stated that freezing causes analgesia both during the procedure and post-operative period. The wound healed in two weeks without any dressing as observed by Lane (1974) that cryosurgery itself has bactericidal activity requiring no attention to the site during the process of healing. Moreover Zwart (1986) stated that repeated irritation caused by cleaning and rubbing prevents healing in reptiles. Hence cryo application of two freeze-thaw cycles for three minutes was effective in treating the infected wound in the python as observed by Krahwinkel *et al.* (1976) in domestic animals.

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Figure 1. Picture showing the python with ulcerated wound at the tip of its tail