Feline Dexamethasone Suppression Test

Indications

Test of choice for the diagnosis of naturally occurring hyperadrenocorticism (Cushing's Syndrome) in cats

Notes

- Concurrent illness, such as diabetes mellitus, can lead to false positive test results when testing for hyperadrenocorticism in cats. To minimise this risk, consider ruling out and/or stabilising concurrent illness before testing for hyperadrenocorticism.
- The duration of the suppressive effects of intravenous dexamethasone is more variable in cats than in dogs and higher doses are required to achieve consistent suppression.
- The results of this test should never constitute the sole evidence for the presence of this disease.
- If exogenous glucocorticoids have been administered a withdrawal period may be required before a dexamethasone suppression test is performed to allow normalisation of the pituitary-adrenal axis. Please contact the reference laboratory for further advice.

Protocol

- Collect a baseline blood sample (1-2 ml in a plain/gel tube).
- Inject **0.1 mg/kg of dexamethasone intravenously**, via IV catheter. Consider diluting in saline/water for injection for accurate dosing.
- Collect the second blood sample (1-2 ml in a plain/gel tube) 4 hrs post-injection.
- Collect the third blood sample (1-2 ml in a plain/gel tube) 8 hrs post-injection.
- Ensure the samples have clotted and centrifuge the samples 30-120 minutes after collection.
- For samples collected in plain tubes, please separate the serum into another plain tube (this step is not necessary for samples collected in gel tubes).
- Please label all tubes with the patient's name and the time of sampling.
- Please include the patient history, including drug history, on the request form.
- Submit the separated serum samples and the request form to the reference laboratory (Test code DSTC).
- Cortisol will be measured in all three samples.