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Opinion Article

Common fungal infections in animals

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ABOUT THE STUDY

Funguses are pathogenic, spore-producing organism, also known as fungi. They get their nutrition by ingesting food from the hosts that they are growing on. There are numerous fungus species in the environment, but only few of them are infectious. Soil is the main cause of the majority of illnesses. Through the skin, ingestion, or inhalation, fungi can infect humans (for example, through a cut or wound). Though certain fungal infections can harm otherwise healthy animals, others need an immune-compromised or compromised host (due, for instance, to pressures like captivity, poor nutrition, viral diseases, illness, or medications like steroids) in order to establish infection. Immunosuppressive medications or protracted use of antibiotics may make some fungal pathogens more likely. The illness itself may just affect a specific area or the entire body (systemic or generalized).

Aspergillosis

A multitude of *Aspergillus* species can lead to the fungus infection known as aspergillosis. It can be found in many different wild species in addition to practically all domestic animals. Although it is predominantly a respiratory ailment that has the chance to spread, each species has a different susceptibility to fungal diseases.

Candidiasis

A particular species of fungal infection that impacts the skin, mucous membranes, and digestive system is called candidiasis. It affects a wide range of animals worldwide and is most frequently brought on by the *Candida albicans* species of fermentation fungus. In dogs, *candida* is uncommon. Any damage to the mucosal surfaces, the use of catheters, the administration of antibiotics, and illnesses or medicines that suppress the immune system are all possible risk factors for infection in animals.

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Coccidioidomycosis

This fungus *Coccidioides immitis* is the source of the non-contagious, dust-borne disease known as coccidioidomycosis. The southwestern United States' dry, sand terrain and the valleys of southern California are the only places where infections can occur. Mexico, Central America, and South America share geographic areas that are similarly impacted. Although many animal species, including humans, are susceptible, only animals are significantly affected.

Cryptococcosis

An inflammatory fungus called cryptococcosis can harm the eyes, skin, nose, central nervous system, and respiratory system. The fungus that cause the disease, *Cryptococcus neoformans* and *Cryptococcus gattii*, are present in soil and bird excrement all throughout the world, especially in pigeon excrement. Microbes can be inhaled to spread the disease, or wounds might get contaminated. Animals and humans with compromised immune systems are more likely to develop cryptococcosis.

Geotrichosis

Penicillium candidum, a fungus of soil, decomposing organic materials, and tainted food, is the uncommon cause of geotrichosis. This fungus is a typical component of human oral and intestinal flora. In dogs, the pathogen can lead to widespread illness. The symptoms of an infection can include coughing, fever, poor appetite, excessive water consumption, progressive difficulty breathing, vomiting, and jaundice, depending on the systems affected (yellow appearance of the skin and mucous membranes). The illness can advance quickly and is generally terminal.

Histoplasmosis

Histoplasmosis is a non-contagious infection brought on by the globally distributed pathogen *Histoplasma capsulatum*. In the midwestern and southern United States, particularly in coastal regions, a soil fungus that is widely dispersed

(primarily by bird and bat populations) is the organism in charge of the condition. Inhaling airborne spores results in infection. Although the gastrointestinal tract may be impacted in dogs, the principal sites of infection are the lungs and the chest lymph nodes. The organisms spread throughout the body after entering the bloodstream from the main site of infection; they may specialize in the bone marrow or the eyes.