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FREE, live, interactive LafeberVet webinar*
RACE-approved for 1 hour of continuing education

Sedation and Pain Management of Exotic Companion Mammals

*The importance of safe sedation and pain management protocols
in exotic companion mammals*

Presenter: [Dario d'Ovidio](#), DVM, MS, SpecPACS, DECZM (Small
Mammals)

Sunday, December 13, 2020 – 1 pm EST (New York)

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Exotic companion small mammals, such as rabbits, rodents, and ferrets, are popular pets, and are frequently presented to veterinary practitioners for several medical reasons. These patients can easily become stressed from handling, therefore sedation and anesthesia are often required for many noninvasive clinical procedures. Additionally, chemical restraint is required for any painful or invasive procedure. Much of the information on exotic animal anesthesia comes from studies performed in laboratory animals or is extrapolated from dogs and cats, however important differences exist in anatomy, physiology and drug metabolism between domestic and exotic mammal species or even between exotic animals belonging to the same order.

Sedation is often preferred over general anesthesia in exotic animal patients to reduce anesthetic risk in exotic animal patients, particularly in sick or debilitated individuals. Sedation also reduces anxiety and stress in both healthy and diseased patients. Drugs can be administered solely, or better in combination to achieve synergistic effects to allow overall reduction of the dosage of each single drug as well as required inhalant agents thus decreasing risk associated with the use of heavy sedation or general anesthesia.

Pain management is crucial in several disease conditions and to prevent postoperative complications, such as anorexia, reduced activity, and gastrointestinal disorders. Multiple analgesic therapies are available for exotic companion mammals and mainly include nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and opioids. Locoregional anesthesia and analgesia can be used as an adjunct to sedative protocols and general anesthesia to alleviate pain and to promote a multimodal approach to analgesia. Although research investigating the pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics of local anesthetics is lacking in exotic animal species, these drugs are widely used in the clinical setting with dosages extrapolated from studies conducted in similar species or anecdotal reports. The use of nerve locators or ultrasound guidance is promoted to increase the success rate and decrease the incidence of iatrogenic complications.

Lecture outline:



- Definitions
 - Chemical versus physical restraint
 - Anesthesia versus sedation
- Sedation
 - Injectable agents
 - Benzodiazepines
 - Alpha-2-agonists
 - Opioids
 - NMDA-receptor antagonists
 - Neurosteroids
 - Inhalant agents
- Pain management
 - Systemic analgesia
 - Locoregional anesthesia/analgesia
 - Blind procedures
 - Nerve locator or ultrasound-guided techniques

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for a more detailed abstract and outline.

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[LafeberVet](#) is an ever-growing online library of exotic animal medicine videos, articles, client education material, forms, questionnaires, and much more. Provided by Lafeber Company, LafeberVet is for use by veterinarians, veterinary nurses, wildlife rehabilitators, students in these fields, as well as allied professionals. Access to much of LafeberVet's content is restricted however, registration is free.

About Lafeber Company

[Lafeber Company](#) was built by a father-son team of veterinarians with a shared love of animals and a special passion for birds. Dr. T.J. Lafeber developed the very first commercial bird food pellets in the back room of his veterinary clinic in the early 1970's. Today, our exotic animal diets and critical care formulas are developed by his son, Dr. Ted Lafeber, III along with top veterinarians and nutritionists. An independent laboratory tests every diet to insure optimum pet health. Lafeber Company also consults leading experts in behavior so that our diets promote dietary enrichment.