



Newsletter

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The **history, changes** and **evolvment** diagnostically of **Young Bird Disease**

About 30 years ago we experienced a disease in young birds that seemed to affect **all lofts** in Gauteng within **a few days**. Judging by the phone calls received it **very quickly spread** through the rest of the **country**.

Symptoms shown were mainly vomiting and diarrhoea.

Laboratory results revealed Adeno virus and in most cases it was accompanied by E.coli. It became known as Adeno coli syndrome.

Various treatments were used. No single treatment stood out as treatment of choice. Our Viroban was launched at this time. This was on recommendations of a well- known virologist in Europe. This was combined with Mediprim at that stage.

Many other antibiotics, vitamins, probiotics and herbal preparations were used. No single treatment stood out as the treatment of choice.

Fortunately, with the different treatments we tried, and sufficient **REST**, the birds recovered within a few days. Mortality was relatively low.

Within a few years the symptoms seen appeared to change, the birds showed a more prolonged illness, poor appetite, rapid weight loss accompanied by the vomiting and diarrhoea we saw with Adeno virus. High mortality was found in these cases. Far higher than what we saw with Adeno virus.

Circo virus was isolated from these cases and it was considered at this stage to be the most common cause of YBD.

In a study done by the University of Taiwan it was found in 98% of the birds submitted. Symptoms that had been seen in these birds had varied from poor performance, prolonged illness or death.

More recently Rota virus was isolated from many cases of YBD. Symptoms shown were same as with Circo virus. Mortality was possibly higher. Recovery from this virus is possibly more prolonged than with the other viruses involved, due to severe liver damage.

We now have a situation where Adeno, Circo and Rota virus are the three main viral causes of YBD with Circo and Rota virus playing the biggest role. Herpes and Paramyxo can also be "thrown in the mix".

I read of an interesting case found in Germany fairly recently. A few days after a fancy pigeon show, 80% of the pigeons became ill. 65% of them were diagnosed with Circo virus and 11% of them with Rota virus.

Worldwide there does not appear to be a unanimous agreement as to which virus plays the biggest role. Most authorities agree that Circo virus is perhaps more common as seen in the example mentioned earlier. It lowers immunity making the pigeon more susceptible to most of the common diseases and viruses but Rota virus appears to be the more serious of the two.

At present Rota virus is spoken-of more often.

Which virus appeared first?

Frozen specimens stored from as far back as 2000 show that Circo and Rota virus were found in pigeons at this stage, causing little problem but both must have mutated enough to cause the serious diseases we are seeing now. These viruses must have been present in the pigeons at the same time as Adeno virus was being diagnosed for the first time?

Many researchers are of the opinion that Adeno virus was found first and everyone stopped looking for other viruses?

We have a situation at present where a diagnosis of YBD is made for any condition that makes the young bird ill.

Veterinarians are trying to encourage all to make a more specific diagnosis like Rota virus or Canker or Salmonella or Coccidiosis rather than having the situation as it is now where any sick young bird is said to have YBD.

In summary then, we have discussed..

- Adeno virus "discovered" first. Vomiting and diarrhoea. Disease of short duration and low Mortality.
- Circo virus. Wide spread. Prolonged illness. Lowers resistance to other diseases and symptoms shown depend to certain extent on secondary infections. High mortality.
- Rota virus. In SA "found" last. Prolonged illness made worse by the bird having to recover from liver damage. High mortality. When it appears in your loft for the first time it may affect old birds as well.

For more detailed info and treatment of YBD see Medpet.co.za