

Preface

Gastroenterology



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Guest Editor

Gastroenterology is an exciting and emerging field both in human and veterinary practice. Disorders and diseases of the gastrointestinal system are an integral part of the veterinarian clinician's daily work with exotic companion animals. For the clinician working with nontraditional species, the range of presenting signs, clinical syndromes, and differential diagnoses can be quite varied and potentially overwhelming. This issue of *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Exotic Animal Practice* provides a thorough look at the gastrointestinal system and disease syndromes in birds, reptiles, small mammals, amphibians, and fish species.

The introductory article gives the reader a fascinating and provocative glimpse into the field of human gastroenterology. This article is a collaborative work by a related pair of clinicians, Drs. J. Griffin (father, an MD) and C. Griffin (son, a DVM). These authors give the reader a look at the progressive diagnostic modalities and treatment options in the field of human gastroenterology in the hope of fostering discussion and development of techniques for exotic veterinary patients.

Of all the exotic animal species, the ferret is one of the most susceptible animals to gastrointestinal derangements. This susceptibility has led to the use of this species for human gastrointestinal research into ulcerative gastrointestinal disease, using the ferret *Helicobacter mustalea* as a model for human *Helicobacter pylori* infection and treatment. Dr. Johnson-Delaney has written a very informative article on this very topic, which includes an update on current research findings. Another article, written by Dr. Lennox, provides a comprehensive review of the myriad other gastrointestinal diseases of ferrets.

Avian patients with their unique anatomical adaptations have their own set of gastrointestinal ailments. The reader is provided with a comprehensive look at the disease syndromes of psittacines and raptors, two avian species groups frequently treated.

An update on *Macrorhabdus ornithogaster* infection and its effects on the gastrointestinal system of birds is also included.

Piscine and amphibian species are addressed as well. An enormous range of diverse species is represented in these groups of animals, and the reader will be brought up to date on the anatomy, physiology, and disease syndromes in these aquatic/amphibious patients. A section on reptiles provides an interesting look into the interesting anatomic differences this patient group possesses.

As the number of pet rabbits continues to increase, the veterinary clinician will continue to have rabbit patients present with gastrointestinal disease. For clinicians already working with rabbits, Dr. Reusch's article will serve as a review and for those just getting started, it will provide a comprehensive introduction into rabbit gastroenterology.

My deepest gratitude is extended to all of the authors of this issue. Their time, effort, and expertise have been eloquently captured on these pages to create a comprehensive, up-to-date text on gastroenterology in exotic companion animals. I hope all readers of this issue will be able to glean useful information from these pages that can be applied to daily clinical practice to provide the most comprehensive and progressive diagnosis of gastrointestinal disorders in their exotic animal patients.

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