The 2010 AAHA Diabetes Management Guidelines for Dogs and Cats is an excellent source of information created by leading veterinary endocrinologists to help update and advance the clinical approach to this complex condition. As noted from the beginning, diabetes mellitus (DM) requires a committed effort, both by the veterinarian and the pet owner. By focusing on diagnosis, treatment and monitoring of canine and feline diabetes, these guidelines offer an excellent resource for the practicing veterinarian.

**Diabetic Criteria and Initial Assessment**

Clinical signs of DM in both dogs and cats included polyuria/polydipsia (PU/PD), polyphagia and weight loss. It is important to note that subclinical animals may appear healthy to the owners, lack obvious physical examination changes and are often diagnosed incidentally. A diagnosis of DM should only be made after ruling out stress hyperglycemia (by either fructosamine or repeat testing to show persistent glycosuria and hyperglycemia (>200 mg/dL in the dog and >250 mg/dL in the cat).

The assessment of the diabetic animal should include an evaluation of overall health, identification of complications and/or concurrent disease as well as interfering conditions and risk factors. For this reason, a complete laboratory assessment is necessary to thoroughly evaluate these patients. Table 1: Recommended Diagnostic Testing for Animals With Suspected or Confirmed Diabetes Mellitus provides a list of the recommended diagnostic testing for animals with suspected or confirmed DM and includes a complete blood count (CBC), biochemical profile (including electrolytes), complete urinalysis and urine culture. A fructosamine assay may be beneficial for determining if the origin of hyperglycemia is from stress in some patients (particularly cats) and is highly recommended for ongoing monitoring of both the canine and feline diabetic patient.

**Treatment**

The foundation of treatment for clinical DM in both the dog and cat is insulin therapy and dietary adjustment. The treatment section of the guidelines focuses on initial treatment and monitoring of the cat and dog as well as dietary therapy for both subclinical and clinical animals. For each species, the guidelines specify insulin dose and propose a timeline for adjustment until the desired glucose levels are established for the pet. This section also provides detailed information about monitoring frequency and management of these patients. A portion of the treatment section is also dedicated to client education, and Table 2: Web Links for Staff and Client Education provides approved web links for staff and client education.

**Indications, Method and Interpretation of the Blood Glucose Curve in the Dog and Cat**

The blood glucose curve (BGC) is integral to proper long-term monitoring of these patients and should be done when the physical examination or history suggest poor control, PU/PD is persistent or signs of hypoglycemia are noted. A BGC should also be done two weeks after any change in insulin type or dose. The guidelines provide a protocol, but it is noted that time can be an issue for the typical practice and the stress of the hospital environment combined with that of the procedure can lead to unreliable results in some patients. When possible, home monitoring of blood glucose is preferred. A fructosamine test provides key complementary information about glucose control over the previous weeks and is critical for obtaining a more complete and reliable clinical assessment when monitoring these patients.

**Troubleshooting and Client Education**

The concluding parts of the AAHA guidelines focus on troubleshooting the “uncontrolled diabetic” and client education. The main goal with client education is to realistically define the commitment (time, effort and money) involved and provide the necessary encouragement. A suggested list of topics to cover with the client is provided in the client education section.

To view the complete 2010 AAHA Diabetes Management Guidelines for Dogs and Cats, please visit https://www.aahanet.org/Library/DiabetesMgmt.aspx.