

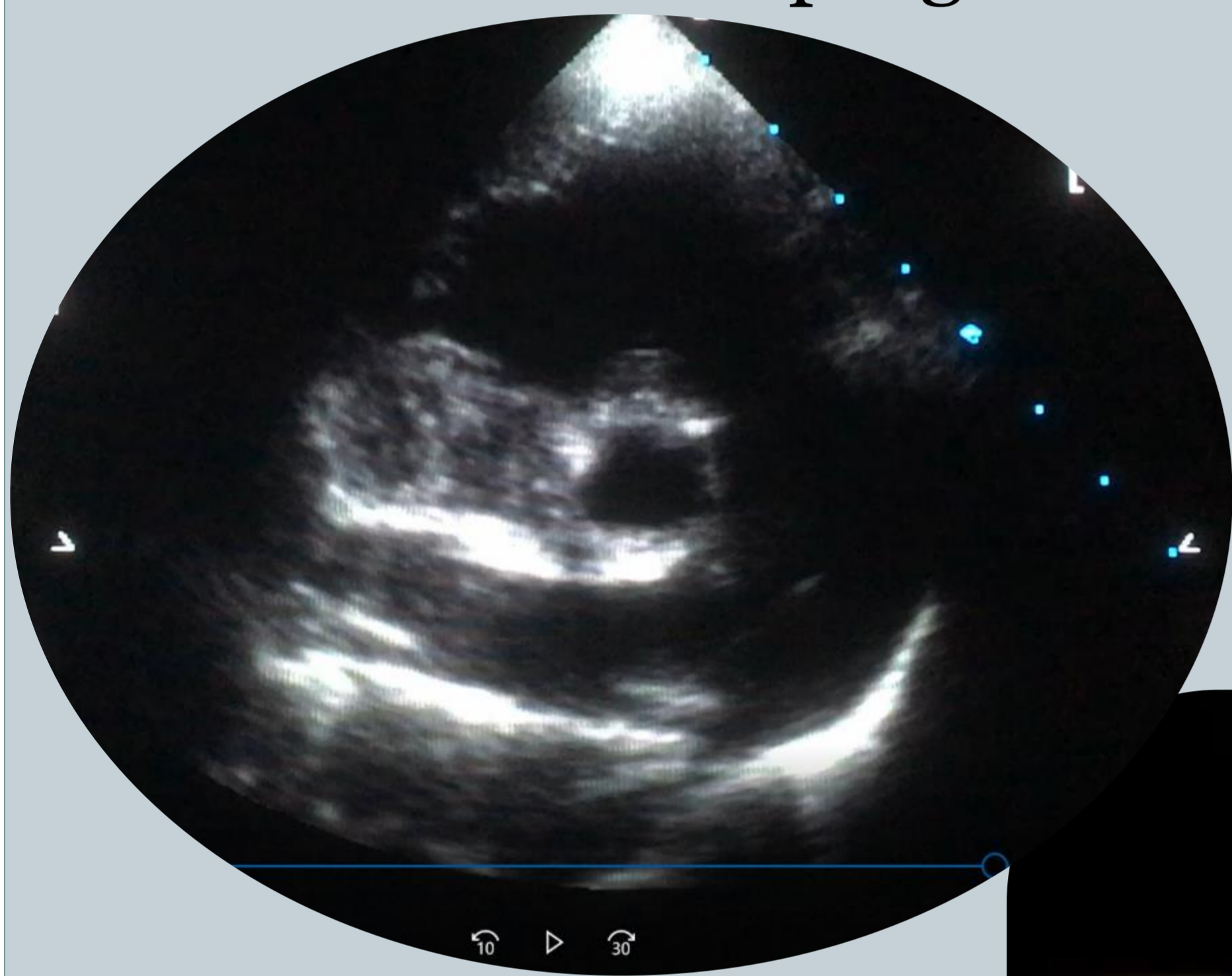
# Usage of Rigid Alligator Forceps in Surgical Treatment of Caval Syndrome Due to Heartworm Disease

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## INTRODUCTION

Caval Syndrome is well described in some dogs with cardiopulmonary dirofilariosis as a serious condition with poor prognosis. We want to present our experience with the surgical removal of heartworms from right heart chambers by using rigid alligator forceps without fluoroscopic guidance.



## MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the last 3 years we had 14 dogs with ultrasound and HW positive testing confirmed caval syndrome. 10 dogs were operated on by jugular phlebotomy on the left side and carefully inserted the rigid alligator forceps to the point when ictus cordis was palpable on the forceps. Then we proceeded by pushing the forceps a little bit ventrally and gently grasped the worms and pulled them out. After several unsuccessful attempts to catch the worms, we halted with our further attempts and checked for the worm presence in the right atrium and right heart chamber by ultrasonography. We concluded our intervention if no more worms are visible.

## RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Two dogs didn't survive the procedure – one because of iatrogenic tearing of the right atrium and cardiac tamponade, the second one died due to cardiac arrest during surgery. Five dogs, after removal of the worms received three step adulticide treatment and were on careful follow up and are in good condition at the moment. One dog died due to acute kidney failure five days after the procedure. Two dogs survived the surgery but died within six months due to unknown causes.

In our opinion, removing worms with rigid alligator forceps is an acceptable procedure for any general practitioner with basic echocardiography and surgical skills who works in hyper-endemic areas with high incidence of dogs with caval syndrome

