

**AN UNUSUAL NERVOUS SYNDROME IN CATS**

Q.: I have observed the following syndrome in several cats and would like your opinion concerning its cause and treatment. These animals are extremely nervous, and exhibit twitching of the skin over the back and tail head, frantic switchings of the tail, and such erratic behavior as sudden arousal from sleep followed by wild dashing about the room. These signs are not related to estrus, cystitis, external or internal parasites, or anal sac impaction.—L., Arizona.

A.: This is not an unusual syndrome in cats and likely has more than one cause. I believe that it is nearly always associated with the occurrence of painful stimuli which originate in the anal sacs or abdomen. Despite your elimination of this cause in your cases to date, anal sac impaction is frequently responsible for this syndrome and should always be considered. Sensations related to the presence of intestinal parasites, dehydrated feces, or foreign bodies are conceivably causative. Adhesions or sequestra (foreign bodies) associated with abdominal surgery have occasionally been incriminated. I don't think the syndrome is associated with vertebral or spinal cord lesions. Nor are lesions of the central nervous system likely responsible. Each case should be considered separately as its cause is sought. Treatment, of course, will depend upon the cause. — E. J. Catcott, DVM, PhD.