A rare case of ovarian leiomyoma in a lion (Panthera leo)

College of Veterinary Medicine, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

A twenty year old intact female lion (Panthera leo), owned by a wildlife facility in North Carolina, was presented to its primary care veterinarian for progressive anorexia, weight loss, and lethargy of three months duration. Following sedation and chemical immobilization, physical examination and palpation revealed a large mass in the caudoventral abdomen. Given the animal’s age and recent decline, euthanasia was elected and a necropsy was performed. The left ovary was enlarged with a multinodular firm surface measuring 11x9x3.2 cm. On cut surface the ovary showed both solid and cystic portions. Histopathology revealed a well-circumscribed, non-encapsulated mass completely replacing normal parenchyma and blending with the adjacent smooth muscle suggesting ovarian leiomyoma. Female reproductive tract leiomyomas are well documented in the literature, typically arising from uterine tissue. Ovarian leiomyomas have been reported in several veterinary species,1-4 but they remain rare, and to the authors’ knowledge this is one of two reports of this neoplasm in a lion.3 While reports of tumors in large felid species are limited in the literature, the most commonly reported reproductive tract tumors are uterine leiomyomas. Due to the benign nature of leiomyomas they typically do not cause substantial morbidity or mortality, however when arising from the reproductive tract they can present complications in captive conservation breeding efforts.

References