Approaches to canine castration in Nigeria
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Only 1% of dogs in Nigeria are castrated. As part of a larger study into the reasons for this low castration rate, this survey sought to determine the most common methods of castration, the concerns of veterinarians regarding castrations and the level of awareness of veterinarians of alternatives to surgical castration. Questionnaires were distributed to one hundred veterinarians during 2012. The questionnaire established the demography of respondents, recorded their methods of castrations, common complications associated with castration and awareness of alternative castration methods. Descriptive statistics comprising frequency table, cross tabs and chi - square tests were used to analyze data. Statistical analysis was performed with SPSS 19.0 (IBM Corporation, North Castle, NY). Ninety five of 100 (95%) questionnaires were completed. The majority of respondents (52.1 %) had postgraduate qualifications, worked in mixed practices (58.7 %) and had been in practice for ≤10 years (64.2 %). Castrations are often performed on dogs of mixed breeds (42.7 %) and usually for elective reasons (84.3 %). Most (95.6%) castrations are performed surgically. Most (91%) surgical castrations are performed under sedation (xylazine) and local anesthesia (line block with lidocaine). Most respondents administer analgesics (acetaminophen; 54.5 %) or antibiotics (89.9 %) after castration. Some respondents (42.1 %) reported complications after surgical castration, with scrotal swelling (27. 6 %) and scrotal mutilation (11.5 %) listed as the most frequent complications. While the majority of respondents (67.4 %) were aware of alternative castration methods (such as chemical agents and the use of an emasculator), few (9.7 %) have used such methods. The majority of respondents (68.4 %) are willing to adopt non-surgical methods of castration. Level of education, number of years in practice and type of practice had no significant effects (P> 0.05) on the choice of castration method, the frequency of complications or the awareness of alternatives to surgical castration. The results of this survey showed that most veterinarians in Nigeria use the surgical method of castration, and that complications associated with this method occur rather frequently, but are considered relatively insignificant. However, owing to welfare concerns regarding surgical castration in dogs, veterinarians in Nigeria need to be increasingly made aware of non-surgical methods of castration.

Keywords: Castration, veterinarians, dogs, Nigeria