| Condition | Description | Clinical signs | Diagnosis | Treatment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **'Barbering'** | ■ occurs in grouped animals – the dominant gerbil over-grooms the others | ■ alopecia anywhere on the body | ■ gross and microscopic examination reveals broken hair shafts. The skin is not inflamed<br>■ seeing the gerbils barbering each other | ■ rule out other differentials<br>■ separate the gerbils |
| **Seizures** | ■ common in certain in-bred genetic lines; occurs from two to three months of age, being outgrown by six months of age<br>■ can be exacerbated by changes to the environment<br>■ other causes include Tyzzer's disease and neoplasia | ■ twitching, drooling<br>■ mild hypnotic episodes<br>■ generalised 'grand mal' seizures | ■ clinical signs and history | ■ minimise stress<br>■ keep environment the same<br>■ rarely any call for medication |
| **Neoplasia** (**Figure 2**) | ■ common in gerbils over two years of age<br>■ reproductive neoplasia and scent gland neoplasia are most common<br>■ various tumour types occur | ■ depends on the tumour type<br>■ scent gland neoplasia can present as a thickening, ulceration or nodular change to the gland | ■ histopathology<br>■ cytology | ■ swift surgical intervention |
| **Dental disease** (**Figure 3**) | ■ mainly caused by trauma ('bar chewing') | ■ weight loss, inability to eat/chew correctly<br>■ gross dental changes | ■ clinical examination (conscious and under general anaesthesia)<br>■ history | ■ move into enclosure with no bars<br>■ regular trimming with straight cutting disc<br>■ never clip the teeth |
| **Ovarian cysts** (**Figure 4**) | ■ common in gerbils over two years of age<br>■ can often have ovarian neoplasia at the same time (Martorell, 2017) | ■ symmetrical alopecia<br>■ abdominal distention<br>■ dyspnoea | ■ clinical examination<br>■ ultrasonography<br>■ exploratory surgery<br>■ histopathology | ■ surgery to spay |
| **Obesity** | ■ caused by inappropriate diet<br>■ can result in diabetes mellitus as a result of persistent hyperglycaemia and insulin intolerance (Collins, 2008) | ■ excessive BCS<br>■ glucosuria<br>■ PU/PD | ■ urinalysis<br>■ blood glucose<br>■ clinical signs | ■ improve diet to achieve weight loss |

**Table 1.** Common infectious conditions seen in gerbils

seen in this species, however, it is prudent to touch on drug contraindications for the species. The antibiotics penicillin, amoxicillin, amoxicillin/clavulanic acid, ampicillin, clindamycin, cephalosporin, streptomycin, lincomycin and erythromycin should never be used in these species (Hoppmann and Barron, 2007).

**Tables 1 & 2** list the most common conditions seen in the species.

"Hamsters are solitary species – consequently they will fight and cause significant wounds to each other, if housed together"