Infectious bursal disease (IBD) and coccidiosis concurrent infections in Nigerian indigenous chickens. A case report

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An outbreak of concurrent infectious bursal disease (IBD) and caecal coccidiosis was reported in a flock of 45 indigenous chickens comprising 36 unsexed chicks and 9 adult hens which resulted in 75 per cent mortality. The chickens were reared on free range « back yard » system and they were not immunized against any prevalent disease. The chicks just showed severe depression, ruffled feathers and greenish watery faeces on the 29th day of age. These were followed by passage of bloody faeces with the onset of the coccidiosis. The adult hens were not affected.

At necropsy, the birds showed emaciation, dehydration and congestion of the pectoral and thigh muscles. The bursa were either swollen or atrophic. The caecal pouches were haemorrhagic and distended with either blood or mucoid haemorrhagic ingesta. Histopathological examination revealed marked lymphocytic depletion of the bursa and spleen and interfollicular fibroplasia were evident in the bursa. The caeca showed desquamation of the superficial layers of the mucosa, intense hyperaemia and extensive vacuolations in the glandular epithelial cells. Schizonts and merozoites were found in many enlarged epithelial cells.

Serodiagnosis using the suspensions of the bursa from the dead birds against sera from the surviving birds in the agar-gel diffusion test showed positive reactions. The increased susceptibility and mortality observed in the chicks would tend to suggest that their prior infection with IBD before the onset of coccidiosis resulted in immunosuppression.

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