

Faster method to spay cats found to be safe, effective

April 22 2015, by David Stauth



A new type of procedure to spay female cats has been shown to be safe, effective, and saves a little bit of time – which can be important in some high-volume programs such as those operated by animal shelters.

A study on the procedure has been published in the *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery*, by Kirk Miller, a [clinical instructor](#) with the College of Veterinary Medicine at Oregon State University, and practicing veterinarian with the Oregon Humane Society in Portland.

It found that a procedure called a "pedicle tie" is effective at stopping blood flow through two vessels that go to a cat's ovary, a preliminary step to removing the ovary and uterus. It's essentially tying the vessels in a knot – and works just as well, and is about 30 percent faster, than a procedure used for decades that required multiple ligatures to accomplish the same purpose.

There had been no prior study on this approach, and some concern it might cause additional bleeding. But in a survey of 2,136 kittens and adult [cats](#) that were neutered using the new technique, it was found to be safe with no significant increase in hemorrhagic complications, and slightly reduced the time the animal needed to be under anesthesia.

And, for an average procedure, it saves a couple of minutes out of an overall operation that can take from six to 20 minutes, depending on the skill and experience of the practitioner.

"Saving two minutes may not sound like much, but when you do thousands of these procedures every year, like we do, it can add up in savings of both time and money," Miller said. "Over the course of a year this may free up about two weeks of time for both the surgeon and anesthetist. That increased efficiency means we can serve more animals, provide the care they need and make them eligible to find new homes."

The procedure can be taught fairly easily and expertise in it gained within a week or two, Miller said. With its safety and efficacy now verified, it's anticipated that the [procedure](#) may soon be used much more broadly, he said.

Aggressive spay and neuter programs are needed to help address broader concerns about unwanted and homeless companion animals. The American Society for Prevention to Cruelty to Animals estimates there may be as many as 70 million stray cats in the United States. Neutering

of dogs and cats helps to address this critical problem, while improving both their behavior and their health.

Provided by Oregon State University

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