

# capsules

## THE CURRENT LITERATURE IN BRIEF

### **For the Dry Eyes in the House**

Keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS or dry eye) is a common, potentially blinding, ophthalmic condition that develops from a lack of tear production. Awareness of KCS has grown, and thus prevalence of the diagnosis in dogs has increased. A simple Schirmer tear test determines lack of aqueous component (quantitative) or lack of stabilizing oily mucin layer (qualitative), with aqueous deficiency being the most prevalent and therefore the most studied problem. KCS can be caused by immune-mediated or metabolic disorders; infectious diseases, such as distemper, leishmaniasis, and conjunctivitis; hormone deficiency; neurologic dysfunction; drug-induced destruction of tear-producing cells; third eyelid prolapse; and as a result of radiation therapy. Diagnosis is based on characteristic clinical signs: mucopurulent ocular discharge, keratitis, conjunctivitis, and abnormalities found by checking eyelid function and blink reflexes. Medical therapies consist of antibiotics for infection; artificial tear replacers; tear stimulants; cyclosporine (a T-cell inhibitor that aids stimulation of tear production in dogs); or surgery to correct physical defects and recreate optimal ocular surface environments.

**COMMENTARY:** Because veterinarians are diagnosing KCS more frequently in patients as awareness has increased, the need for a thorough understanding of its nature and treatment are especially important. This article provides a good overview.

*The causes, diagnosis, and treatment of canine keratoconjunctivitis sicca. Carter R, Colitz CM: Vet Med 97:683-694, 2002.*