

## Boo's Story: When the Worst of CMO Happens by Carolyn Lambert

This is my experience with Craniomandibular Osteopathy (CMO).

I was told that CMO was an old disease and it hadn't shown up in Cairns in years. Nothing could have been further from the truth.

In my third Cairn litter, born on Halloween, I had one tiny pup who stood out from her littermates. We named her Wee Boo. Boo quickly became my daughter's favorite and my daughter doted on her. From the start, Boo had problems nursing, so I had to supplement her with a bottle. I watched her try to nurse off her mom. At times Boo succeeded and at other times she did not. It was as if she couldn't or didn't know how to open her mouth. I thought it was odd that when I bottle fed her, that I had to pry her mouth open to get the nipple in. I did this for about a week and all of a sudden everything seemed fine. Boo was gaining weight, her eyes opened before any of her littermates and she was the first one to start exploring the whelping box.

Then a couple of weeks later there was a dullness in Boo. She would sit in the whelping box and just stare. She did not move around much and she didn't nurse as much, but that only lasted about a week. Then Boo was back to normal. At 6 weeks the puppies got their first shots and I noticed that when my hand brushed by her she cried out. I thought she must be sore from the shot. She didn't want to play with the others and would hide from them. I figured it was a reaction to the shot. Unfortunately, I was wrong--dead wrong.

When Boo was nine weeks old, I touched her face and she screamed in pain. I was aware of the symptoms of CMO, but I said to myself, no way is this CMO--she is only 9 weeks old and this doesn't show up till 12 weeks. I posted the situation on a Cairn breeder list online and was contacted by a kind breeder who once had a CMO pup. The breeder told me to try to open Boo's mouth and if she screams she has CMO. So I tried to open Boo's mouth and she screamed. I was in denial. I thought there was no way this little darling could be sick--NO WAY! I took her to my regular vet. The vet knew nothing about CMO and had not even heard of it. I told my regular vet what I knew and the vet looked up the disease. He then agreed that it must be CMO but wanted a confirmation by a canine dental specialist. So I made that appointment. Boo was now 10 weeks old when she saw the dental specialist. The dental specialist prescribed an anti-inflammatory drug for Boo called Metacam (a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory ((NSAID)) medication used to treat pain, stiffness, and inflammation in dogs). I was instructed to give Boo Metacam as needed. That dental specialist then referred me to Dr. TK Warfield. Dr. Warfield is the orthopedic vet who helped the Scottie club conduct their study on CMO. So he knew a lot about CMO. I had to wait to see Dr. Warfield. Boo was now 12 weeks old. Dr. Warfield confirmed the CMO diagnosis and ordered that Boo be put on Metacam all the time. The reason that Dr. Warfield did not do an X-ray at this time was because he could feel the bone spurs on her face under her right ear.

At first, Boo's symptoms occurred every three weeks like clockwork. Eventually, she was on Metacam all the time as she continued to be in constant pain and could not eat.

You might be wondering why Boo wasn't given steroids. It was because the vets felt that giving a puppy so young steroids would have some serious side effects that would damage development.

During the time Boo was ill, I kept searching for information and answers. I was told by some breeders to place her as a pet, and that she would outgrow the CMO. Other breeders told me to get over myself because I was so upset. They said this would not kill Boo. I was angry, frustrated and very concerned. I would not even consider placing a puppy I knew to be sick and in such pain. So I kept Boo and nursed her as best I could.

Boo kept getting worse and worse despite the pain meds. Eventually, at five and a half months of age, she was not eating and could not open her mouth. She shied away from her littermates and hid in a corner of the pen. I called Dr. Warfield and explained what was happening. He told me to bring her in because it was time to do an X-ray. It turned out that Boo was a severe case of CMO. The CMO was in her mandible and engulfed her tympanic bullae.

I took Boo in for the X-ray. Dr. Warfield believes that when they were manipulating her jaw, one of the bony spurs from the CMO penetrated her brain. When Boo woke up, she was in severe pain. Dr. Warfield tried to make her comfortable, but she passed within hours. He explained that her CMO was so bad that if she had not died with him, she would have died a horrific painful death later on or would have had to be put down.

While all this was happening I was desperate for information and answers. I contacted the breeder from whom I got my Cairns. Since the sire was from her kennel and my bitch was also, I asked if she had ever had CMO in her kennel. I was told no, she never had CMO in any of her dogs. Well crap, I thought, where did this come from? How did I get so lucky to have bred it? After all, this was only my third litter.

To have a pup in this much pain is crazy. You feel helpless and you doubt yourself. It all seemed like a nightmare that I could not wake up from. You can avoid this heartache by testing your dogs. The test was not available at the time the dam and sire of my litter bred. Unfortunately, the test became available just months after Boo died. I did the right thing at the time and spayed the dam and placed her. I kept one of the boys from the litter, who finished his championship very fast. I tested him thinking the test would come back as a carrier, but to my surprise he was affected. He carried two copies of the gene yet never showed any symptoms. This means that the dam and sire were either affected or carriers, or one of each. He has not, and will never be bred. I don't want to pass this on. So you just never know if it is in your lines unless you test.

This litter was heartbreaking. Watching a helpless, wee pup in so much pain and not being able to do anything for the little one is something I would not wish on my worst

enemy. Had there been a test available when I bred my girl, I would have done it and saved us this nightmare. I write this story not for sympathy, but to educate the reader on the importance of testing. Please, before breeding, make sure both the dam and sire are tested. You don't need to relive poor Boo's sad story.

