

# Ten common causes of squab death during pigeon rearing

## Short communication

Squab deaths in most pigeon farms were very common. Out of 10 diseases, 60% occurred by feed serving, 10% were both for microbial and genetical causes and 20% for the parents' behaviour of those squabs. If a rearer could provide balanced diet in various stages and observed pigeons' behaviour deeply it would be possible to overcome above mentioned problems/diseases. In Bangladesh remarkable squab deaths were found in most pigeon farms. Within these very common was embryonic death within the egg. For completely confined rearing or semi-intensive rearing system pigeons cannot take enough vegetables. From my own experiences if pigeons are reared in open place they easily can take grass or other plants which can be a good source of vitamin K. By providing green/red amaranath inside the cage for ensuring vitamin K or other good components of the pigeons may overcome their any vitamin deficiency. Pet shops of the country always provide lots of vitamin either they are water soluble (A, D, E, K) or others. In any emergencies some experienced pigeon keepers help to remove egg shell during hatching. For this, due to hand pressure heavy bleeding may happen which enhances chick death. In this case, for any newcomer, special care should be taken and of course need help from an expert at the first stage.

If the growth of squab is good of course it can hatch later. In pigeon/dove, it shows unequal size of the squab. This is very natural and genetical cause. This is another cause of squab death. Poorly grown squab is automatically died for malnutrition. Transferring that squab to another pair in very few cases it can overcome but for genetically weak squab most cannot. Some pigeons fight on the squab after hatching and it is a great cause of the chick death. That time alternative use of parents may avoid such death. Inexperienced parents show the foot pressure on squab which is another cause of squab death. Pigeon keepers are always supplied same type of feed in different stages which are not scientific. In fact, till now, pigeon rearing in Bangladesh is just a hobby and only wheat, corn, and paddy are common feed items. Paddy is dangerous for its bristles which can attach within the gullet of the pigeon and causes canker. After 3-5 days of hatching we should provide very fine granular feed. Large-sized feed may store in squabs' crop and causes compaction. Rearers use more vitamins which are good for early production but the longevity or viability of those pigeons may fall later. Rearers collect or buy pigeons from the unwanted sources. Before hatching if we supply highly energetic feed to parents, it creates immediate heat which will be fatal for the squab. If this case, hand feeding or transfer the squab to another parent is must.

After discussing with some pigeon rearers normally they are not bothered for taking adequate knowledge on their bird. So day after day they are facing same types of problems of those squabs in their loft. For this experiment, Indigenous/Local Pigeon, Lotan, Tumbler, Lahore, Indian Fantail, and Sottobanca pigeons were observed. At the time of hatching or after hatching within a few days, above incidents were found. After embryonic death, dissection was completed and observed the raw umbilical cord. From the various sources these types of squab death records were collected. Deaths for the unequal growth

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**Ashraful Kabir M**

Department of Biology, Saidpur Cantonment Public College, Bangladesh

**Correspondence:** Ashraful Kabir M, Department of Biology, Saidpur Cantonment Public College, Nilphamari, Bangladesh, Email ashraful\_w@yahoo.com

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of squab in many farms were common. Supplied feed were not found in good ratio in maximum farms (Table 1).<sup>1</sup>

**Table 1** Observed causes of squab death.

Problems	Probable causes
Hatching problem	Vitamin K
Parental fighting/Great injury	Behaviour
Unequal birth (Congenital)	Genetical
Lack of crop milk	Feed
Early heat of the parents (before/after hatching)	Feed
Compaction	Solid feed
Paralysis	Lack of calcium and phosphorus
Twisted neck	Microbial
Feet pressure	Behaviour
Omphalitis	Feed/Irregular temperature in the loft

Out of 20 diseases in pigeons of Bangladesh 30% were for bacterium, 20% viruses, 15% rearing problem, protozoan and vitamin deficiency 10% and fungal, Mycoplasma and feed related were 5%. In addition, paralysis and twisted neck (torticollis) were common in most pigeon farms in Bangladesh.<sup>2</sup> Presence of *Salmonella paratyphi* (bacterium) the young dies within the egg and if hatches neck shows twist. Twisted neck for Paramyxovirus was first discovered in North Africa then North America. This disease is closely related to Newcastle Disease.<sup>3</sup> Excreta of pigeons carry *Aspergillus* and *Salmonella*.<sup>4</sup> 80-90% *Trichomonas* protozoa transmitted from human to pigeons. As other birds, pigeons are occasionally treated as zoonotic harbor.<sup>5</sup> In Tanzania, domestic pigeons are kept as poultry species.<sup>6</sup> Firstly we

need to know actual knowledge of pigeon rearing. Ancient method is not suitable now-a-days. If we change our mentality and treat this pigeon keeping not only hobby but also on its commercial value we can overcome maximum squabs' mortality. In abroad senses, the overall pigeon loft management in Bangladesh is mentionable. If there were found above diseases only culling/killing method is applicable. For the better output rearers will maintain good hygiene in their farms and total observation as a researcher is must. In loft, air passing system, adequate light, and cleaning of the farms are three booster doses for preventing any diseases. Excess number of birds (6 feet x 6 feet x 6 feet is good for 20 birds) and poor ventilation creates ammonia gas toxicosis which lead to ocular discharge. After any death of pigeon, post mortem report should preserve for any future attack. For survival of fancy pigeons/pigeons, scientific management needs to apply.<sup>2</sup>

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### Conflicts of interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest.

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