

TABLE 4.2**Examples of SOC Approaches in Practice**

Example*	SOC Approach
Staged diagnostics	The veterinarian may first opt for a PCV/TS evaluation (via a hematocrit tube) and in-house UA strips and USG if the information gleaned from these diagnostics can guide the care plan significantly. More costly diagnostics (e.g., complete blood count and urinalysis) may be offered later if deemed necessary.
Orthopedic alternatives	If plating a fracture is too expensive, the practitioner may consider splinting if deemed appropriate. Amputation may also be an option for the patient if the family has financial and/or transportation issues that preclude regular splint changes and other associated costs.
Heartworm “slow kill”	Although the ideal treatment for a heartworm-positive dog is “adulticidal” treatment with melarsomine, the cost and logistics of this treatment may be out of reach for some clients. Instead, a practitioner may consider doxycycline followed by long-term treatment with a moxidectin-based product (so-called “slow kill”) to address the condition.
Alternative treatment protocol for non-critically ill blocked cats	In this alternative, cats are treated with cystocentesis, subcutaneous fluids, ± light sedation and are put in a quiet, darkened cage. In one study, 65% of these cats spontaneously urinated on their own and were discharged without recurrence. [†]

For more information, see AlignCare’s Incremental Care Guide at <https://pphe.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/AlignCare-Incremental-Veterinary-Care-Guide-Narrative-1.pdf>.

*For all examples, the client would be briefed on the risks and benefits of all options and all discussions and decisions documented in the medical record.

[†]Cooper ES, Owens TJ, Chew DJ, et al. A protocol for managing urethral obstruction in male cats without urethral catheterization. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2010;237(11):1261–6.

PCV/TS, packed cell volume/total solids; UA, urinalysis; USG, urine specific gravity.

The 2024 Community Care Guidelines for Small Animal Practice are available at aaha.org/community-care.

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