Rottweilers: in sickness and in health

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OBJECTIVES

Rottweilers were selected in the 19th century for protecting, herding cattle and pulling carts. However, the majority are now kept as companion animals. This study aimed to identify the demography and common disorders of Rottweilers.

METHODS

Dogs recorded as Rottweiler were identified from all dogs under veterinary care during 2013 in the VetCompass database of primary-care veterinary data. The clinical records of a random sample were manually examined in detail to extract data on all disorders recorded during 2013 and all deaths. Descriptive statistics reported demography, disorders and mortality.

RESULTS

Rottweilers comprised 5,316 (1.17%) of 455,557 study dogs. The median bodyweight for dogs aged over 18 months was 44.9 kg (IQR: 39.4-51.0) and 42.7% were neutered.

The prevalence of the most common disorders recorded among a random sample of 2,198 (41.3%) Rottweilers that presented to practices during the study period examined in detail were aggression (7.46%, 95% CI 6.36-8.56), obesity (7.05%, 95% CI: 5.98-8.12), otitis externa (6.14%, 95% CI 5.14-7.15) and osteoarthritis (4.69%, 95% CI: 3.80-5.57).

There were 415 deaths during the study period. The median age at death was 9.0 years (IQR: 7.2-10.5). The most common causes of death were collapse (14.7%), osteosarcoma (10.9%), aggression (4.2%) and lymphoma (3.5%).

STATEMENT

These findings can assist veterinarians to advise owners on predictable life expectancy and morbidity. The finding that aggression was the most common diagnosis in Rottweilers suggests strong efforts need to be made to ensure that prospective and current owners are aware of this aspect of the breed character.

Disorders of German shepherd dogs attending primary-care veterinary practices in the UK

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OBJECTIVES

Although the German shepherd dog (GSD) is a popular working and companion dog breed, the overall disease burden in GSDs is not well described. This study aimed to describe disease patterns for morbidity and mortality in GSDs under primary veterinary care in the UK.

METHODS

Dogs recorded as GSD were identified from all dogs in the VetCompass database of primary-care veterinary data

during 2013. The clinical records of a random sample were manually reviewed in detail to extract data on all disorders recorded during 2013 and all deaths during the available records. Descriptive statistics reported disorder prevalence and mortality.

RESULTS

GSDs comprised 12,538 (2.8%) of the 455,557 overall population. The prevalence of the most common disorders recorded among a random sample of 1,627 dogs examined in detail were otitis externa (8.2%, 95% CI 6.8-9.5), osteoarthritis (5.8%, 95% CI: 4.7-7.0), diarrhoea (5.5%, 95% CI 4.4-6.6) and obesity (5.3%, 95% CI: 4.3-6.4).

There were 240 deaths during the study period. The median age at death was 10.3 years (IQR: 8.0-12.1).

For dogs with a recorded cause, the most common causes of death were collapse (11.3%), degenerative myelopathy (8.3%), osteoarthritis (7.4%) and aggression (4.1%).

STATEMENT

The current study provides an evidence base to highlight frequent conditions and support any planned reforms in the breed. The results may also assist veterinarians in advising owners on predictable life expectancy and morbidity.