CONCLUSION

It is possible to model the clinical language used to describe consultations for a rare syndrome and subsequently use that model to generate a tool capable of distinguishing between consultations of that syndrome and other reasons

for consultation. This generates the possibility of identifying cases suggestive of the illness where the clinician has not yet identified them as such. This model requires further validation using new clinical cases. The methods utilised here can be applied to other syndromes.

Feline calicivirus infection in European veterinary practices – prevalence, risk factors and molecular epidemiology

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Feline calicivirus (FCV) is a highly contagious pathogen causing upper respiratory disease in cats. FCV is an RNA virus showing high levels of genetic diversity. Vaccination is widely used to control disease. However, it does not prevent infection and approximately 10% of household cats shed the virus. The objectives of this study are, for the first time, to estimate the prevalence of FCV, describe its molecular epidemiology and

define risk factors for infection at a European level.

Sixty-three randomly selected veterinary practices in five European countries (France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden and the UK) were asked to collect oropharyngeal (OP) swabs from feline patients. Diagnosis of FCV was by isolation in cell culture by standard techniques. A short questionnaire was completed for each sampled cat. RT-PCR was conducted on all isolates followed by consensus sequencing. Neighbour-joining phylogenetic trees were constructed based on capsid sequences. Logistic regression was used to identify risk factors associated with FCV isolation using data obtained from questionnaires.

Forty-four (70%) of the recruited practices returned a total of 1410 OP swabs. From these, 130 tested FCV positive (9.2%). Epidemiological analysis indicated variables including neuter status, breed, lifestyle, clinical symptoms and vaccination status as risk factors for FCV shedding.

A phylogenetic tree based on 111 sequences showed high strain diversity evidenced by a radial phylogeny, with more than one strain isolated from each country and no evidence of widespread international transmission.

This European study confirms previous national estimates of FCV prevalence and risk factors, showing that FCV remains a persistent threat to our feline patients. Phylogenetic analyses showed high strain diversity, emphasising the need for ongoing surveillance.

Utilisation of the Small Animal Veterinary Surveillance Network (SAVSNET) to investigate vaccination trends in companion animals in England

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Vaccination forms a major part of the veterinary professions' strategy for preventing spread of communicable diseases in companion animals. However, there have been no attempts to investigate nationwide vaccination trends. The Small Animal Veterinary Surveillance Network (SAVSNET) is a collaborative project between the University of Liverpool and the BSAVA set up to monitor companion animal disease in the UK, using data collected from both private practice and diagnostic laboratories.

In private practice a range of information can be gathered at consultation, this includes vaccination histories.

Here we present descriptive statistics for vaccinations using consultation data collected between 28.01.2014 and 16.09.2014 from 57 veterinary practices in England, including 16,594 dogs, 7,705 cats and 1,154 rabbits. The term 'vaccinated' was defined as any animal that had received at least one vaccination. Vaccination dates ranged between 30.04.1998 and 16.09.2014. Proportions and confidence intervals were calculated using robust standard errors to allow for the clustering within veterinary practices. A confidence level of 95% was used.

Overall, 81.5±0.6% of dogs, 71.4±1.0% of cats and 54.0±2.9% of rabbits had been vaccinated. Mean age at first vaccination for dogs was 1.0±0.02 years and for cats, 1.3±0.1 years, with 69.1±0.8% of dogs and 60.8±1.3% of cats being first vaccinated at under one year old. Mean number of vaccination events in vaccinated dogs was 3.3±0.04 and in cats was 3.2±0.1. When considering neutered status, 86.6±0.8% and 78.7±1.3% of neutered dogs and cats were vaccinated respectively, compared with 77.4±1.0% and 57.1±2.5% of non-neutered animals. 92.4±0.6% and 88.6±1.1% of micro-chipped dogs and cats were vaccinated, compared with 67.7±2.2% and 58.2±2.0% that were not. Finally, when Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) scores are considered, dogs

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originating from the least and most deprived quintiles were vaccinated at $82.5 \pm 1.2\%$ and $76.0 \pm 2.6\%$ respectively. This compares with cats at $75.9 \pm 1.9\%$ and $63.4 \pm 4.6\%$.

These results suggest dogs and cats are vaccinated differently in practice, with a greater percentage of dogs being vaccinated, and at a younger age, than cats. Neutered and microchipped animals have a greater vaccination percentage

in both species. Finally, there appears to be a trend towards a higher vaccination frequency in animals originating from less deprived locations. This data can inform vaccination campaigns by identifying populations of animals that are most likely to be under-vaccinated according to national and international vaccination guidelines, and thereby improve disease control.