all tau forms was reduced in the tumour group relative to normal controls ($p < 0.001$).

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

These results suggest that brain tau status changes in the context of tumour growth. If confirmed in a larger sample,

this would support development of minimally-invasive tau profiling techniques to accelerate ante-mortem diagnosis and better stratify patients to appropriate treatment protocols.

Investigating the roles and attitudes of first opinion veterinarians during oncology referral

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OBJECTIVES

In human medicine, considerable research about the roles of general practitioners during oncology referral has identified areas for changes, which have potentially benefited both patients and healthcare professionals. Such information, however, does not exist in veterinary medicine. This study's aim is to investigate the roles and attitudes of First Opinion Veterinarians (FOVs) during oncology referral, in order to determine the roles currently played by FOVs and elucidate any concerns

FOVs have regarding oncology and the referral process. The findings will then be compared with similar studies undertaken in human medicine.

METHODS

'RCVS Approved Training Practices' were randomly selected and emailed an online screening questionnaire. Once an FOV had completed the questionnaire, a phone interview was conducted consisting of eleven open ended questions about the clinicians experiences and attitudes. Thematic analysis was applied to transcriptions of the interviews to identify key themes.

RESULTS

Eleven FOVs completed the screening questionnaire nine of whom were interviewed. We found that that FOVs believe that they play a key role in managing patients, and assisting clients to navigate the complex and stressful discipline of oncology. In addition they work to ensure that patient welfare is always the primary concern throughout treatment, as they believe themselves to be guardians of patient welfare.

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

This preliminary study was the first on this topic in veterinary oncology, providing an insight into the FOV viewpoint and a starting point for future research on the topic.

Biologically aggressive mast cell tumour in puppies with good outcomes: 3 cases

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OBJECTIVES

Canine mast cell tumors (MCT) usually affect older patients; however, occasional reports in younger dogs are reported in the literature. The aim of this study is to describe the clinical presentation, histological characteristics,

prognostic factors (including KIT mutation), and follow up in three puppies which developed biologically aggressive cutaneous MCTs at the age of <6 months and which all had favourable outcomes (even in the absence of aggressive treatments).

METHODS

Retrospective case series including 3 puppies diagnosed with biologically aggressive MCT developed <6 months of age. For each patient clinical presentation, histopathology (+/-immunohistochemistry), c-kit mutations and long term follow up were available.

RESULTS

The three patients developed a MCT between 2 and 6 months of age. Locations were pinna (case 1), bridge of the nose/nasal planum (case 2), and right antebrachium (case 3). Based on histopathology characteristics (+/-immunohistochemistry) and clinical behaviour all