Comparison of diseases and problematic behaviours in cats confined indoors or allowed outdoor access

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OBJECTIVES

To investigate whether being an indoor only or allowed outdoor access cat influences the risk of problematic behaviours and health issues.

METHODS

Data were obtained from owner completed questionnaires from the Bristol Cats Study, a longitudinal study of cat health, welfare and behaviour. Univariable and multivariable logistic regression models were used to analyse the association of measures of health (obesity and hairballs) and behaviour (negative interactions with owners, chewing on fabric and retained kitten behaviour) with indoor/outdoor cat status at age 2.5 years.

RESULTS

Of 1,318 cats eligible for the study, 28.3% of cats were not allowed outdoors and 71.7% had outdoor access. Compared to cats that have outdoor access, cats that live exclusively indoors had greater odds of being obese ($p=0.002$), were more likely to chew on fabric ($p<0.001$) and suffer from hairballs ($p<0.001$). Indoor-only cats were less likely to show negative interactions towards owners ($p=0.001$). No significant association was found between an indoor-only lifestyle and retained kitten behaviour.

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

The results from the study will help vets when advising owners about how best to provide for an indoor-only lifestyle for their pet.

A prospective study of risk factors for gingivitis in a cohort of UK pet cats

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OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to estimate the prevalence of gingivitis in a cohort of owned pet cats, aged up to six years, and to investigate factors that increased the risk of gingivitis in cats from the same cohort, aged between three and four years.

METHODS

Data were obtained from a longitudinal study of domestic cats, using owner-completed questionnaires and

veterinary surgeon-completed oral health scores. The presence of gingivitis was defined as an oral health score of grade one or above. Prevalence estimates of gingivitis for cats aged up to six years old were calculated. Data pertaining to cat signalment, hunting behaviour, diet and dental care were assessed for association with the presence of gingivitis in cats aged between three and four years, using univariable and multivariable logistic regression analyses.

RESULTS

The prevalence of feline gingivitis ranged from 24.5% in cats less than 12 months old, to 56.3% in cats aged between five and six years. The odds of having gingivitis were higher in cats fed a wet or mixed wet and dry diet than cats fed dry diet only (OR 2.7), and in cats that were not reported to hunt (OR 2.1), cats that were reported to dribble whilst being stroked when aged 6 months (OR 3.2) and cats with orange variants in their coat colour (OR 2.3).

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

These results will help veterinary surgeons identify cats that may be at a greater risk of developing gingivitis, in order to advise owners on dietary management and monitoring of oral health.