Welfare of 50 mature client-owned cats

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OBJECTIVES

To assess the welfare of client-owned mature cats using the feline Code of Practice (Animal Welfare Act, 2006; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-for-the-welfare-of-cats>) as a framework.

METHODS

50 cats aged 7–10 y were invited to attend the Feline Healthy Ageing Clinic in association with Royal Canin at the University of Liverpool Veterinary Practice as part of

the Cat Prospective Ageing and Welfare study (CatPAWS) from February–September 2017. Data were collected using an enrolment questionnaire completed by owners prior to their first consultation. Data was subjectively assessed against the Code of Practice to determine compliance.

RESULTS

All 50 cats were considered to live in a suitable environment. 6 cats (12%) were at risk of not receiving a nutritionally complete diet, whilst 17 cats (34%) were provided with a single water source next to their food bowl. Although a possible concern regarding ability to express normal behaviour was recognised in 40 cats (80%) through restriction of their environment, only 4 cats (8%) were not given additional environmental enrichment. 28 (56%) of cats lived with 1 or more other cats, of these 17 (61%) showed behaviours indicating social conflict. Regarding preventative health measures, 24 (48%) received annual vaccinations, 42 (84%), were treated for parasites, and 49 (98%) were neutered.

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

This preliminary study suggests that possible welfare concerns are relatively common in middle-aged pet cats. The utility of wellness screening to identify and positively influence feline welfare requires further study.

Deciphering common health issues in Persian cats under primary veterinary care in the UK

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OBJECTIVES

As a popular UK cat breed, the Persian comprises a substantial part of feline primary-care caseloads. This study aimed to describe the demography, common disorders and mortality recorded for Persian cats attending UK primary care practices.

METHODS

This was a retrospective cohort study of Persians under veterinary care during 2013 using the VetCompass

database of primary veterinary care clinical records. Information collated included demographics and clinical disorder data manually extracted through examination of the full clinical records.

RESULTS

The study included 3235 Persians (1.1% of all cats). The median age was 7.0 years (IQR 3.3–11.6). The median adult bodyweight for females was 3.6 kg (IQR 3.1–4.1) and males was 4.5 kg (IQR 3.9–4.5).

The most common specific disorder terms were haircoat disorders (13.0%, 95% CI 11.8–14.2), periodontal disease (11.3%, 95% CI 10.2–12.5), overgrown nails (7.2%, 95% CI 6.3–8.1), ocular discharge (5.8%, 95% CI 5.0–6.7), heart murmur (5.8%, 95% CI 5.0–6.7) and flea infestation (5.1% 95% CI 4.4–5.9).

There were 575 deaths during the study. The longevity of males (13.1 years, IQR 9.2–15.6) was shorter than females (14.0 years, IQR 10.3–16.7). The most common disorder groups as a cause of death were renal disease (23.4%, 95% CI 19.5–27.7), neoplasia (8.5%, 95% CI 6.1–11.5) and mass-associated disorders (8.0%, 95% CI 5.7–11.0).

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

The results of this study have shown renal disease to be the main cause of mortality and highlighted haircoat disorders as the most prevalent overall disorder. These results suggest that grooming advice could form a mainstay of veterinary advice to owners to improve welfare.