Getting under the skin of West Highland White Terriers using primary practice clinical data

**Zoie F. Ballantyne, Dave C. Brodbelt,
David B. Church, Dan G. O'Neill**

Royal Veterinary College, Hertfordshire, United Kingdom

OBJECTIVES

West Highland White Terriers (WHWT) are often considered by veterinarians as 'the itchy/scratchy breed' but little prevalence exists on their overall health. This study aimed to report demography, mortality and common disorders in WHWTs under UK primary veterinary care and to explore co-morbid disorder associations with otitis externa (OE).

METHODS

Demographic, mortality and disorder data for the year 2016 were extracted from VetCompass™ de-identified patient records.

RESULTS

This study included 2053 WHWTs. Median age was 7.8 years (IQR 4.3–11.1). Of 164 deaths recorded, the median longevity was 13.4 years (IQR 11.0–15.0). The most commonly recorded causes of death were lower respiratory tract disorder (10.2%, 95% CI 4.9–15.4), neoplasia (10.2%, 95% CI 4.9–15.4) and spinal cord disorder 7.8% (95% CI 3.2–12.5). The most common specific disorders were periodontal disease (15.7%, 95% CI 14.1–17.3), OE (10.6%, 95% CI 9.3–11.9), overgrown nails (7.2%, 95% CI 6.1–8.4), hypersensitivity (allergic) skin disorder (6.5%, 95% CI 5.4–7.6%) and obesity (6.1%, 95% CI 5.1–7.2%). Of the top 20 disorders, no non-epidermal disorders were co-morbidly associated with OE while 3 of the 10 epidermal disorders (pododermatitis, pyoderma and dermatitis) were associated with OE.

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

Compared with other common breeds, WHWTs were heavily over-represented for skin disease. High comorbidity between skin diseases suggests common underlying aetiopathogenesis pathways that may offer opportunities to control several skin conditions simultaneously. High mortality due to lower respiratory tract disease suggests that clinical focus should be placed on respiratory function in older WHWTs.

Factors associated with owner acquisition of puppies under 8 weeks of age

**Rachel H Kinsman¹, Rachel Casey¹,
Michelle Lord¹, Joshua Woodward¹,
Séverine Tasker^{2,3}, Toby Knowles²,
Rosa Da Costa¹, Jane Murray¹**

- 1 Dogs Trust, London, United Kingdom
- 2 University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom
- 3 Linnaeus Group, Shirley, United Kingdom

OBJECTIVES

To identify owner- and dog-related risk factors associated with acquisition of puppies under the recommended age of 8 weeks.

METHODS

The owner-reported data used in this analysis were collected from online questionnaires completed by puppy

owners living in the UK and ROI who registered puppies <16 weeks of age into a longitudinal study.

Multivariable logistic regression was used to test for associations between acquisition at <8 weeks of age and potential explanatory variables (including breed (specific named/mixed/unknown), source of puppy, whether puppies were viewed with mother and/or father, previous dog ownership and number of times the puppy was viewed before acquisition).

RESULTS

Excluding home-bred puppies, 26.5% (423/1597) were acquired <8 weeks of age. Two variables were retained in the model:

1. Owners who had owned other dogs during adulthood were more likely to acquire puppies <8 weeks old, compared with 'first time owners' or those 'who had a family dog as a child but not subsequently' (OR = 1.45, 95%CI 1.09–1.92, $P < 0.010$)
2. owners who visited their puppy at least once before acquisition were more likely to obtain puppies <8 weeks old, compared with owners who did not see their puppy before acquisition (OR = 1.74, 95%CI 1.34–2.27, $P < 0.001$)

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

Advice regarding minimum acquisition age was not followed by 26.5% of this cohort, particularly those with

Oral presentations

previous dog ownership experience. Future research within this longitudinal study will investigate the influence acquisition age has on various health/behaviour

outcomes, with the potential to provide evidence for puppy purchasing recommendations regarding minimum age at acquisition.

Identifying disorders of greatest importance to Staffordshire Bull Terriers under veterinary care

**Holly Roberts, Dave C Brodbelt,
David B Church, Dan G O'Neill**

RVC, Hertfordshire, United Kingdom

OBJECTIVES

Staffordshire Bull Terriers (SBT) are a common UK dog breed, but reliable and generalisable health data are limited. This study aimed to report demography, mortality and common disorders in SBTs under first-opinion veterinary care in the UK during 2016, with a special focus on obesity.

METHODS

Signalment, diagnosis and mortality information were extracted from anonymised VetCompass™ clinical records. A cross-sectional analysis was used to report

the 1-year period prevalence of the most commonly diagnosed disorders.

RESULTS

The study included 20,837 (6.19%) SBTs from 336,865 dogs overall. Adult bodyweight of males (median 21.5 kg, IQR 19.1–24.0) was heavier than females (18.6 kg, IQR 16.5–21.0) ($p < 0.001$). Median longevity was 12.0 years (range 0.60–19.82). The most common causes of death were neoplasia ($n = 34$, 16.66%) and mass-associated lesion ($n = 23$, 11.27%).

The most prevalent disorders overall were overgrown nail(s) ($n = 216$, 6.67%, 95% CI: 4.66–7.53), overweight/obesity (176, 5.44%, 95% CI: 4.48–6.02), otitis externa (167, 5.16%, 95% CI: 4.4–5.92) and skin (cutaneous) disorder (163, 5.04%, 95% CI: 4.29–5.79).

Female SBTs had 1.5 times the odds of overweight/obese than males. SBTs aged 10 years and over were over twice as likely to be diagnosed as overweight/obese as dogs aged below 10.

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

This presentation will discuss the most common disorders of SBTs and explore how this information can be used to prioritise health management in the breed. The results will provide veterinarians with a solid evidence-base when advising owners on clinical and lifestyle decisions for their SBT.

What factors influence the development and outcome of Gastric dilatation and volvulus (GD/GDV) in Greyhounds?

Sarah Dolbear¹, Mark Dunning^{2,1}

- 1 University of Nottingham, School of Veterinary Medicine and Science, Nottingham, United Kingdom
- 2 Willows Veterinary Centre and Referral Service, Solihull, United Kingdom

OBJECTIVES

Greyhounds appear anecdotally to be at an increased risk of developing GD/GDV. Little specific research has been conducted into particular factors influencing the onset of GD/GDV in the breed. This study aimed to identify epidemiological characteristics that influence the development and outcome of GD/GDV in Greyhounds.

METHODS

A survey containing multiple choice and free text questions was constructed and distributed to Greyhound owners in person and via email. Microsoft Excel was used for descriptive and inferential statistics.

RESULTS

Data was available for 83 Greyhounds, of which 19 suffered from GD/GDV. Significantly, 14 (78%) of the dogs which

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