Poster presentations

Annual weigh variation in mature cats

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OBJECTIVES

To determine the magnitude and seasonality of variations in bodyweight measurements from client-owned cats enrolled in a wellness programme.

METHODS

Records were available from 31 mature cats (≥ 7 years) attending the Royal Canin Healthy Ageing Clinic. Variation as a percentage of body weight at enrolment was calculated for each cat.

RESULTS

Weight change was minimal.

	Median (% change in BW)	IQR
Six month	-0.4%	-2.7% to 4.4%
Twelve Month	-0.6%	-5.3% to 2.4%

Cats were then assigned to groups based upon the time of year they were enrolled (Q1 winter, 4; Q2 spring, 16; Q3 summer, 11).

	Six Month Median (% change in BW)	Twelve Month Median (% change in BW)
Winter	-1.45% (IQR -2.035 - -0.85%)	-1.55% (IQR -3.13 - -0.55)
Spring	0.18% (IQR -3.0 - 4.85)	1.5% (IQR 0.55 - 3.89)
Summer	-0.31% (IQR -3.1 - 4.58)	-4.8% (IQR -7.58 - 1.625)

There were no statistically significant differences found between these three groups at the 6-month time point. However, at the 12-month time point, cats enrolled in Q2 were significantly more likely ($P = 0.020$) to have gained weight than cats that were enrolled in Q3.

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

This preliminary work suggests a seasonal effect on the bodyweight of mature cats. However, these findings should be confirmed by assessing a larger group of cats over a longer period.

How old is your cat?

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OBJECTIVES

To explore the accuracy of veterinary age assessment in mature cats and the effect that health status may have on the visual appearance of age.

METHODS

Data were collected from 135 mature cats (7–10 years) enrolled at the Feline Healthy Ageing Clinic at the University of Liverpool. At time of enrolment, owners completed a questionnaire which gathered information

on date of birth, whether this was an estimate or was known, details of where the owner had acquired the cat, and how old the cat was when acquired. At their initial appointment, each cat had a thorough physical examination, and routine clinicopathological assessments (haematology, serum biochemistry and urinalysis). The attending veterinary staff (KJE, NJD) also subjectively assessed whether the cat: looked 'younger than their reported age', was 'age-appropriate', or was 'older than their reported age'. Cats were also subjectively classified as being 'healthy', 'in fair health' or 'in poor health' based upon physical examination findings, details in their electronic patient records, and results of routine clinicopathological tests. For comparison, cats were grouped according to the accuracy of their age, summarised below.

RESULTS

An accurate age was known for 73 cats (54%), a close estimation was known for 22 cats (16%), and age was not accurately known for 40 (30%) cats.

Cats with an inaccurate age were 5.9 times more likely to have poor health (95% CI 1.2 – 29.3). A cat that looked older than its purported age was 18.6 times more likely to have poor health (95% CI 3.9 – 88.0).