Nutritionally-Based Improvement of Cats' Skin & Coat Health, in Non-Flea, Non-Food-Induced Hypersensitive Dermatitis

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OBJECTIVES

Non-flea, non-food-induced hyper-sensitivity dermatitis (NFNFiHD) represents up to 20% of pruritic cats. A European multicenter clinical trial was initiated to evaluate the benefits of a nutritional solution formulated to improve skin and coat health in neutered cats suffering from this chronic skin condition.

METHODS

For two months, cats were fed exclusively a dry food whose formula included $\omega 3$ fatty acids, γ -linoleic acid,

and nutrients to help strengthen skin barrier. Veterinary investigators evaluated cats' skin lesions (SCORFAD), body weights (BW) and body condition scores (BCS), at inclusion, and after one and two months. Amongst cat owners' evaluations were acceptance of the food and cats' overall skin & coat condition.

RESULTS

Eleven neutered cats completed the study. There was a significant decrease of average pruritus score between inclusion and final visit (from 2.63 to 1, $p = 0.0018$), difference seen after four weeks already (from 2.63 to 1, $p = 0.0023$). Lesions improved also, SCORFAD significantly decreasing, after four weeks (from 6.9 to 2.4, $p = 0.0009$), effect maintained till the study end (from 6.9 (inclusion) to 1.9, $p = 0.0003$). Owner-assessed palatability was evaluated as good, which didn't impair the maintenance of these neutered cats' BW and BCS throughout the whole trial. Interestingly, at intermediate visit (four weeks), except for anti-flea treatments ($n = 2$ cats), veterinarians deemed no additional concomitant drug was necessary.

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

Nutrition can constitute an efficient tool within the overall multimodal management of feline NFNFiHD, pet owners' testimonials confirm it ("better coat, less scratching", "less irritable cat"). Randomized controlled trials should be performed to confirm the efficacy of this new diet.