

## **Prioritising treatment uncertainties: Chronic kidney disease in owned cats**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

This information sheet, aimed at both cat owners and veterinary surgeons, provides background information on a survey which you have been invited to complete about chronic kidney disease in cats ([www.surveymonkey.com/s/felineCKD](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/felineCKD)).

#### **What's the study about?**

The Centre for Evidence-based Veterinary Medicine (CEVM) is conducting a study with cat owners and veterinary surgeons to identify uncertainties about the treatment of chronic kidney disease (CKD) in cats. This will involve a short survey to identify the questions owners and vets have about the treatment of CKD. The survey will be followed by a meeting of cat owners and veterinary surgeons who have volunteered to help prioritise the 'treatment uncertainties' found. The study has received approval by the ethics committee at the School of Veterinary Medicine and Science, University of Nottingham.

#### **What is Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)?**

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is common in older cats. CKD causes weight loss, inappetence (reduced appetite), vomiting (sickness) and many other unpleasant clinical signs. It is a progressive disease that we cannot cure.

#### **What treatments are there?**

Even though CKD cannot be cured, there are now a number of treatments available that may slow its progression, alleviate the signs of disease and potentially increase life expectancy. Some of the treatments have more information (evidence) about their beneficial effects (efficacy) than others. Treatments that you may be aware of include prescription diets, tablets, powder or liquid that goes with food, and injections.

#### **What are treatment uncertainties?**

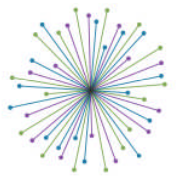
'Treatment uncertainties' occur when questions about treatment cannot be answered by up to date information based on research evidence – essentially they are unanswered questions about treatment. We are most interested in issues that have been encountered during discussions or consultations between cat owners and veterinary surgeons caring for cats with chronic kidney disease. Therefore if you have a question or are uncertain about any aspect of the treatment of chronic kidney disease in cats, we want to know about it!

Identifying treatment uncertainties in feline medicine is a new idea. Examples of uncertainties in other areas of cat care might be:

- *'Which is the best way of preventing fleas in cats?'*
- *'Does oral medication or surgery for hyperthyroidism increase the life expectancy of affected cats?'*

#### **Why is this study important?**

Research about treating cats with CKD often overlooks the shared interests of cat owners and the veterinary surgeons who treat them, and as a result the questions you consider important may not be addressed. The pharmaceutical and medical technology industries and academia play essential roles in developing new treatments, but their



priorities are not necessarily the same as those of cat owners and vets. For this reason many areas of potentially valuable research are neglected. This study involves both owners of cats with CKD and veterinary surgeons, as the opinions of these two groups are needed to ensure the correct research priorities are identified.

### **What will happen to the responses from the survey?**

The questions that are submitted by cat owners and veterinary surgeons will be checked to ensure that they have not been previously answered by existing research. The true uncertainties will then be prioritised to identify the top ten uncertainties of cat owners and veterinary surgeons. This list will be published and provided to organisations that fund research. If you want to be involved with the prioritisation process information is provided at the end of the survey.

### **Who's involved?**

The project is being led by the Centre for Evidence-based Veterinary Medicine (CEVM, [www.nottingham.ac.uk/cevm](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/cevm)) who are working with Vet Professionals Ltd ([www.vetprofessionals.com](http://www.vetprofessionals.com)) and International Cat Care ([www.icatcare.org](http://www.icatcare.org)) to contact cat owners and vets to help us with this study. Information collected will help ensure that those who fund feline clinical research are aware of what matters to patients, their owners and clinicians.

### **How can I get involved?**

If you would like to participate in the study, please complete the short survey [www.surveymonkey.com/s/felineCKD](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/felineCKD)

### **Confidentiality and consent**

You can complete the survey anonymously if you wish. However at the end there is an opportunity to provide your contact details if you wish to be involved in the prioritisation process and receive the results of the study. All personal details will be kept confidentially and securely, in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

### **Contacts**

For further information, or if you have any concerns or complaints about this process, please contact Dr Rachel Dean BMS PhD DSAM(fel) MRCVS, at the CEVM: [Rachel.Dean@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:Rachel.Dean@nottingham.ac.uk), Tel: 0115 9516575.

### **Interesting links**

[www.nottingham.ac.uk/cevm](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/cevm)

[www.vetprofessionals.com](http://www.vetprofessionals.com)

[www.icatcare.org](http://www.icatcare.org)