

Bristol Cats Study Newsletter - Spring 2018

'Bristol Cats' is a pioneering study of cat health, welfare and behaviour run by vets, behaviourists and epidemiologists at the University of Bristol, supported by the Waltham Centre for Pet Nutrition and Cats Protection.

The aim of the study is to improve knowledge of common diseases and behaviour problems of cats, for example (but not exclusively), unwanted elimination, obesity and hyperthyroidism. Findings from the study may be used by veterinary practitioners, cat breeders, owners and the cat community to improve the health and welfare of cats in the future.

Welcome Evelyn!

The Bristol Cats team welcome Evelyn Maniaki, who has been appointed as the new Zoetis feline scholar. Evelyn graduated from University of Thessaly, Greece in 2009 and worked in a busy small animal hospital in Athens before moving to the UK in 2013. After spending a year in general practice, she joined the University of Bristol, where she undertook a clinical training scholarship in small animal medicine and surgery. Evelyn completed the RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice in 2017 and is interested in all aspects of feline internal medicine and critical care. She is a vet with a wealth of feline experience and we look forward to having her in our team.



For her MSc project Evelyn will be investigating 'The impact of feline degenerative joint disease on mobility and quality of life in cats', using data from the Bristol Cats study. Feline degenerative joint disease is a common, but challenging condition in cats, with prevalence estimates ranging from 61% to as high as 99% of cats. Whilst degenerative joint disease can lead to reduced mobility and pain, with significant potential impacts on the cat's quality of life, little is known about risk factors for this condition. Diagnosis of joint disease primarily depends upon owners detecting behavioural changes in activity in their pet, however early detection would allow a multimodal approach to delaying or halting progression of the disease, thereby improving the cat's welfare. Evelyn will also be assisting with other projects within the Bristol Cats Study.

As well as completion of the feline research projects, the scholarship will provide a link between feline clinical work and research, with involvement in a range of feline-related duties such as delivery of CPD and advice to veterinarians.



Funding success: Petsavers MSc

We are pleased to announce that the Bristol Cat study has recently received another grant from Petsavers to fund an MSc investigating risk factors for chronic gastrointestinal signs. Gastrointestinal diseases are common, often chronic conditions, which can have a significant impact upon the cat's quality of life and it is suggested that bouts of persistent or recurrent gastrointestinal disorders may be linked to 'stressful' events. The aim of this project is to investigate environmental risk factors for chronic gastrointestinal problems in cats enrolled in the Bristol Cats cohort study. Factors such as breed and diet, along with potentially stress-inducing environmental factors, such as conflict with other cats, will be evaluated as possible risk factors for the development of gastrointestinal signs.



Future studies:

More funding success!

Some of the cheek swab samples submitted will be analysed shortly, thanks to a grant from the WINN Feline Foundation. This was awarded to Dr Emi Barker, a specialist in Small Animal Internal Medicine at the University of Bristol.

Firstly she will be testing to see how many of the samples are harbouring common infectious diseases, and whether this correlates with vaccination history and any

health concerns as reported by yourselves. Secondly she will

be studying genetic material from the cheek swabs that you collected for us. Research has suggested that some cats are prone to a more severe form of feline infectious peritonitis (FIP) than others, due to variations in their genetic makeup. As a typically healthy group of individuals, the results of the Bristol Cats will be compared to a similar group of cats with the disease.



COLOURING COMPETITION

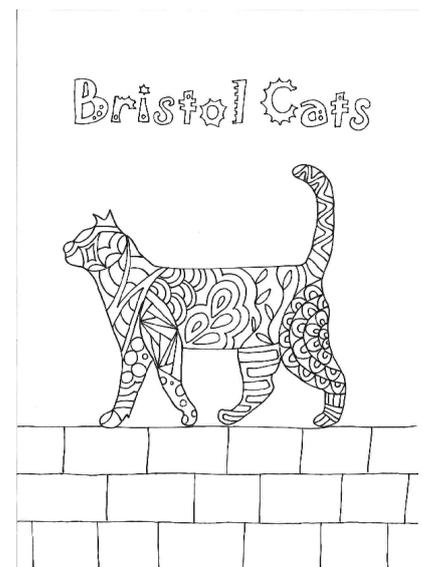
We are running a Summer colouring competition for all budding feline artists! The competition is open to all 'Bristol Cat' owners and their children. It will be judged in the following 3 age categories: 6 years and under, 7-12 years and 13 years and over. The winner in each category will receive a cat-themed prize!

To enter, simply download an entry form from the 'Newsletter' section on our website (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/vetscience/cats>) and send completed entries to:

Jess Williams
Bristol Vet School
Lower Langford
Bristol
BS405DU

Don't forget to include your name and Bristol Cat owner ID number with your entry.

The closing date for the competition will be 1st September 2018, with the winners announced at the end of the month. Good luck!



**Stay up to date with us on twitter (@UniofBristolCats),
Facebook (www.facebook.com/bristolcats.study) or on our website,
(www.bristol.ac.uk/vetscience/cats).**

Study updates:

BSAVA presentations

Jess and Emma (a vet student at the University of Bristol, who you may remember from the last newsletter!) presented their research at British Small Animal Veterinary Association Congress in April.

A prospective study of risk factors for gingivitis in a cohort of UK pet cats Jessica Williams
Ross Harley, Lisa Milella, Timothy Gruffydd-Jones, Claire Roberts, Jane Murray

Comparison of diseases and problematic behaviours in cats confined indoors or allowed outdoor access Emma Gibson, Emily Blackwell, Claire Roberts, Timothy Gruffydd-Jones, Jane Murray,
Jess Williams

“Presenting my abstract at the BSAVA congress in Birmingham was a brilliant opportunity. Working with the Bristol Cats Study team has enabled me to delve into the research side of the veterinary profession. The team are amazing and I look forward to working with them for the rest of the coming year.”

Emma Gibson, final year vet student



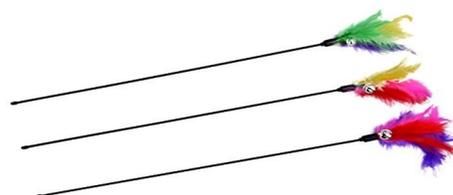
Both of these studies will be published soon, we'll keep you updated!



Questionnaire 10 will be on its way soon....

For those of you whose cats are turning 8 this year (where did the time go?), your 10th questionnaire will shortly be landing in your inboxes! We want to take this opportunity to thank you once more for your invaluable help with this research...without you, we'd have nothing! This year's questionnaire is packed full of questions about every aspect of your cats life from mealtimes to mobility, as there is still so much that we want to know about feline health and welfare and we do realise that it takes a considerable effort to provide this amount of information—Thank you!

We hope you know how grateful we are for your continued input, and as an additional “thank you” for sticking with us this long, we will be giving away a prize to one lucky cat, drawn from Q10 completers each year.



Have you moved house? Please let us know your new address by visiting:

<https://smvsfa.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/info>

You can also let us know about any other changes using this link.

Alternatively you can get in touch using our contact details below:

Tel/text: 07827 981412

Email: cat-study@bristol.ac.uk

Freepost RSHR-AGRJ-UABZ

Bristol Cats, Dr Emily Blackwell

University of Bristol

Langford House

BRISTOL BS40 5DU

‘Meow and Then!’

As our oldest Bristol Cats are turning 8 this year we thought it would be nice to take a look back at what all of the study cats looked like when they joined us as part of the Bristol Cats family. If you have a photo of your cat as a kitten and now as an adult we'd love to see them! To kick things off here is Bristol Cat 'Tyson' as a kitten and here's how he looks now....



Email your photos to us at: cat-study@bristol.ac.uk with the subject "Meow and Then"

Thank you for your help — the Bristol Cat owners and cats are helping to make a difference to our knowledge of factors affecting feline welfare.



We would also like to thank Cats Protection and WALTHAM[®] Centre for Pet Nutrition for their funding towards the study.

