



Characteristics of a UK pet cat cohort

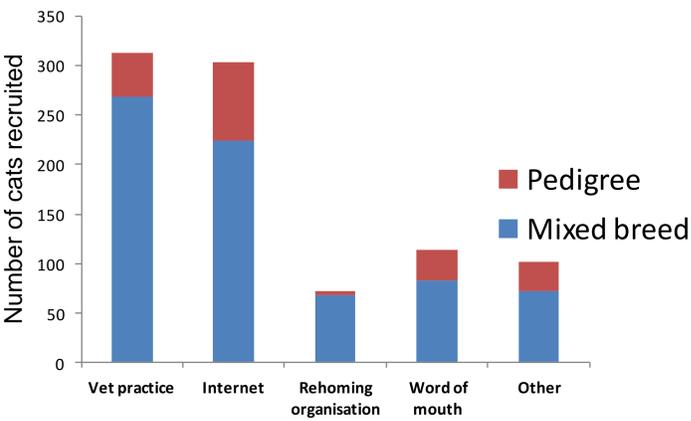


Murray, J.K.¹, Welsh, C.P.¹, Gale, E.¹,
Whitmarsh, A.¹ and Gruffydd-Jones, T.J.¹

¹School of Veterinary Science, University of Bristol, Langford House, Langford, Bristol, UK

Background: UK pet cats aged 8-16 weeks are being recruited (1/6/10-31/12/12) to a long-term longitudinal study, 'Bristol Cats' (www.bristol.ac.uk/vetscience/cats). In 2010, recruitment was restricted to those with a 'BS' postcode (i.e. in the Bristol region), since 2011 recruitment has been UK-wide. The aim of the study is to use prospectively collected data to study risk factors for a range of outcomes, including specific diseases, feline unwanted behaviours and obesity. Data are collected using owner-completed questionnaires at specific ages (8-16 weeks, 6 months, 12 months, 18 months, 2.5 yrs...). Access to veterinary records and to the homes of some owners is being requested in order that some data can be independently verified. This poster shows initial analysis of the data that was conducted to provide information on the background of the cats recruited to the cohort.

Figure 1: How cohort participants heard about the study



Source and breed status of the 'Bristol Cats' compared to UK pet cats:

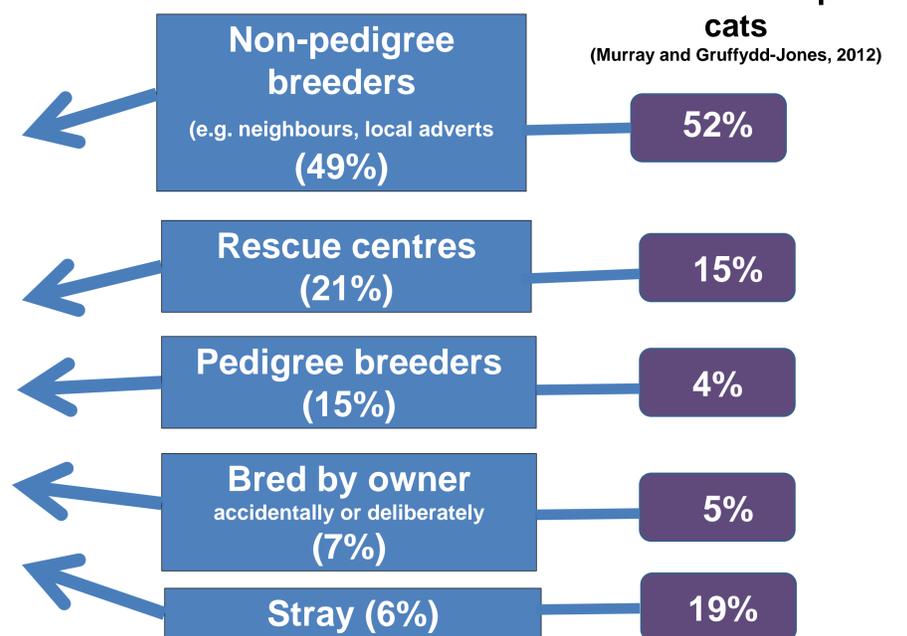
The characteristics (including pedigree status) of cats recruited through different methods were compared with data collected from UK households in 2007 via telephone interviews (Murray and Gruffydd-Jones, 2012) using chi-squared tests.

- Cohort cats were significantly MORE likely than the 2007 telephone sample to be:
 - pedigree cats (21% vs 8%) ($P < 0.001$)
 - sourced from rescue centres ($P = 0.004$) or pedigree breeders ($P < 0.001$)
- Cohort cats were significantly LESS likely ($P < 0.001$) than the 2007 telephone sample to be:
 - obtained as strays ($P < 0.001$)

Where do the first
898
cohort kittens live?



Source of cohort kittens



Purchase price and single/multi-cat households

- 33% were obtained at no cost
 - 14% cost £1-£29
 - 14% cost \geq £200
- 23% were the only cat in the household at the time of registration (age 8-16 weeks) compared with 58% (Murray et al., 2010) of UK pet cats (all ages) and 17% (2/12) of cats aged \leq 5 months, (unpublished data)

"Kittens FREE to good homes"

It is hypothesised that many owners acquire two kittens but if one cat dies many owners do not 'replace this cat'.

Breeding & Neutering plans: Bristol Cats' Owners

Breeding plans: 5% planned to breed

Age owners (not planning to breed, but wishing to neuter) intended to neuter:

- 10% at \leq 4 months
- 23% at 5 months
- 44% at 6 months
- 9% at \geq 7 months
- 14% "not sure"



Summary:

The results of this analysis will be used to direct future recruitment efforts in order that the cohort is representative of the UK pet cat population, i.e. non-pedigree cat owners and owners of stray cats will be targeted during 2012 recruitment.

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REFERENCES: Murray, J.K. and Gruffydd-Jones, T.J. (2012) Proportion of pet cats registered with a veterinary practice and factors influencing registration in the UK. *Vet J.*, 192, 461-466.

Murray, J.K., Browne, W.J., Roberts, M.A., Whitmarsh, A. and Gruffydd-Jones, T.J. (2010) Number and ownership profiles of cats and dogs in the UK. *Vet Rec.*, 166, 163-168.