Perception of Pedigreed Dogs

Inherited disorders in pedigree dogs influence animal health and welfare. Disorders caused by breed standards typically result from selection of exaggerated characteristics but can result from inherited genetic conditions like von Willebrand disease. Breed-related issues also influence services (e.g., tests offered, breeding recommendations, disease treatment, euthanasia) veterinarians offer.

In this study, 227 veterinarians in New Zealand responded to a questionnaire about their perception of the most common breeds presenting with an inherited disorder. These included boxers (hip and elbow dysplasia, cardiac disease), bulldogs (brachycephalic syndrome, hip dysplasia, skin disease), German shepherd dogs (hip and elbow dysplasia, skin disease), Cocker Spaniels (cardiac and skin disease, brachycephalic syndromes), and West Highland white terriers (skin disease, atopy).

The breeds respondents most commonly advised owners not to purchase were bulldogs, shar peis, boxers, West Highland white terriers, and German shepherd dogs. Among the breeds commonly identified as having health and welfare too compromised to continue breeding included the pug, French bulldog, Neapolitan mastiff, shih tzu, chihuahua, dachshund, and Newfoundland. Disparities in responses were seen; for example, the shar pei was not identified as being commonly seen or commonly subjected to euthanasia but were high on the list of concerning breeds. Also, boxers were identified as commonly seen, often advised against, and most often subject to premature euthanasia but ranked only sixth in breeds of concern. Mechanisms for managing inherited disorders were provided by respondents; these could serve as the basis for future discussion.

**Commentary**
The perception of animal welfare issues varies over time in the veterinary community, and studies like this show that variables may include veterinarian’s gender, time since graduation, and the degree of interaction with pedigreed dogs. Interestingly, the subjective bias that develops among veterinarians may play a large role in dictating important animal welfare decisions, a cultural characteristic that we sometimes take for granted. It is important to educate clients on healthcare choices (e.g., breed selection, disease management, euthanasia) in a clear and unprejudiced manner. This promotes both professionalism and animal welfare, regardless of breed.—Heather Troyer, DVM, DABVP, CVA

**Source**

FIV and HIV have many similarities that could help further HIV research. Both viruses have similar genomic organization, receptor usage, and lymphocyte tropism. Both viruses also cause immunodeficiency and increased risk for cancer. This review article, highlights the similarities and differences between FIV and HIV and how knowledge of FIV in cats can help the study of HIV in humans. For both viruses, the hosts have restriction factors that help fight off viral infection. Each of these restriction factors obstructs a different stage of the lentiviral life cycle. Although cats and humans have somewhat different restriction factors, the study of feline restriction factors can help inform human restriction factor research. Currently there are no vaccines that provide strong and lasting immunity from immunodeficiency viruses. The cat FIV model provides a great opportunity to study vaccines for immunodeficiency viruses. Knowledge gained from development of an FIV vaccine can be used to develop an HIV vaccine. The authors concluded that the FIV cat model provides a useful tool for HIV research in humans. FIV in cats can be used to study prevention and therapy in ways that cannot be done in people for ethical and cost reasons.

**Source**