

HEALTH REPORT 2014

This year your Health Committee drew up The Breed Health Plan following the KC Breed Health Improvement Strategy, you will find this on the Club Website under the Health page and we welcome your comments and input so that it can always be kept up to date and relevant to our breed's health. The KC were delighted to hear that we have done this and they wish to have it sent in with the Club Annual Returns, as it is only "required" for the "High Profile Breeds" at the moment.

The puppies referred to in the second paragraph of my Report last year with Kidney problems have been re-tested and are well and thriving. Further to Astrid and Will's kind report on Coracle's Pseudomonas I am delighted to say that they sent me a further report later in the year and much to everyone's delight and relief she is completely well now. I have received a further report from the owner of Wildan Jitterbug, whose fitting I reported to you last year and she has had further fits and is now diagnosed and being treated as epileptic following a raft of tests. I also have to report further fitters who are included in the Fitters List which is now on the Club Website separate from the annual health reports so that it is easy to find and access all the information directly.

A Facebook Otterhound Health Page has been set up and is running very successfully. This is an excellent medium for Otterhound owners to share their specific Otterhound Health experiences and questions, we also have our British Otterhound owning vet Lorna Lazonby and the US owner and vet Joellen Gregory giving basic veterinary advice, though obviously they express how very vital it is that their advice in no way should be used instead of seeking the advice of your own Veterinary Surgeon. We already have over 140 members and some very interesting discussions, so do join, get involved and share your experiences. One of the most recent posts on this Facebook Page is from Lorna from personal experience with one of her hounds as follows:-

"I am very concerned about owners assuming most 'lumps' on Otterhounds skin are sebaceous cysts. I have been a vet in practice in the UK for 35 years and have an interest in Otterhounds and skin – amongst other things. My 10 yr OH has had what felt like 4 small sebaceous cysts for a while - the most recent appeared at Christmas. Yesterday we spent at the Cancer Unit at Glasgow University Veterinary School because, when I took a needle sample of the most recent one to appear about 5 weeks ago, it is an aggressive skin tumour. While I removed it, I took the opportunity to remove the others, too. Yes, 2 of the others were sebaceous cysts but one was a Calcinosis circumscripta – but even to me, who prides myself in my clinical skills, they all felt the same originally. I have taken several suspected seb cysts off my hounds over the years and only 50% of them have been seb cysts. The other 50% were trichoepitheliomas.

A needle biopsy of any suspicious lump only takes a couple of minutes and the animal does not need to be sedated. Lab fee in UK is about £39. I worry about how many animals may be dying prematurely from the effects of what is a very innocent looking lump which is actually cancer."

We have received revised breeding advice from the BVA is as follows:

‘It is strongly recommended that breeders wishing to reduce the risk of elbow dysplasia should select their breeding stock (both dogs and bitches) only from animals with an overall grade of 0. Dogs with elbow grades of 2 or 3 have marked osteoarthritis likely to be due to ED, with or without a visible primary lesion. Dogs with elbow grades of 1 show mild or early osteoarthritis which is also likely to be due to ED.’

The elbow grades of Kennel Club registered dogs under the BVA/KC Elbow Dysplasia scheme can be seen via the Health Test Results Finder (an online Mate Select service). For additional scheme information, please visit the BVA website.

Set out below is the latest epilepsy Report from the University of Missouri.

Epilepsy Research Current Status May, 2013

Background/History

Some years ago, the OHCA and the Otterhound Club co-sponsored a research project aimed at identifying the genetic component(s) of OH epilepsy. The research design involved the comparison of the genes of 20+ sibling pairs --- one affected and one not. By identifying differences consistent across the sample, it was hoped that the relevant genes could be identified. While this method yielded significant results for some breeds, such results were not discovered for OH. (“Significance” refers to the statistical test of whether observed differences are due to “chance” or are real differences).

Current Research

Advances in technology and continued progress in the field of genetic research have resulted in a new research design. The U of Missouri has the results of the whole genome sequencing of a group of dogs (e.g. the placement of each gene on each chromosome). Current research compares each gene of each dog in their sample in pursuit of identifying mutations (unexplained changes in a gene) in one or more of the subjects (e.g. look at Gene #1 of each subject and see if one or more of the subjects has a gene different that the others). The next step is to then identify which trait the gene controls.

All dogs do not look exactly alike, of course, and so there is a range of “normal variation”. Mastiff and a Maltese, for example, different dogs. Within this range of normal variation, however, “outliers” (really, really different genes) might appear. For example, suppose there are 37 dogs in the sample and the “coat colour” genes for 35 of them fall into the normal range. 2 are different.

Looking at the dogs, one discovers that one is purple and the other is orange with green spots. A “coat colour mutation” is discovered and identified.

Funded for a particular purpose by an outside entity, is carried out as money, materials, and time are available. In other words, it's not 24/7. It's been in the works for about 3 months, give or take.

As more and more information is developed, the task of zeroing in on particular characteristics, whether controlled by a single gene or a group of genes, will become more attainable.

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I have also sent in the last Karlton Index report, The Otterhound Population Analysis from the AHT and the AHT PowerPoint presentation on DNA samples held by them to be put on the Club Website.

JUDITH ASHWORTH

**Health Co-Ordinator.
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