SURGERY AWARD

The in vitro antimicrobial activity of triclosan coated polydioxanone suture material on bacteria commonly isolated from canine wounds
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Objectives
1. To determine the in vitro effects of triclosan coated (PDS Plus®) and non-coated (PDS II®) suture material on bacterial growth
2. To determine the in vitro duration of bacterial inhibition of PDS Plus® suture

Methods
10 clinical isolates of Pseudomonas aeruginosa, Staphylococcus pseudointermedius, methicillin-resistant S. pseudintermedius (MRSP), Escherichia coli, and extended spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL)-producing E. coli plus appropriate National Collection of Type Cultures controls. Isolates were incubated with PDS Plus®, PDS II®, an antibiotic disc of known efficacy, and a negative control following EUCAST guidelines. The zone of inhibition (ZI) around the suture material and antimicrobial discs was recorded. Sustained efficacy assays were performed as above (excluding P. aeruginosa), moving the suture material to a fresh culture every 24 hours.

Results
ZIs were seen around PDS Plus® but not PDS II®. Confluent growth occurred with all the P. aeruginosa isolates. ZIs were seen with PDS Plus® for 20 days with S. pseudintermedius and MRSP, 15 days for E. coli, and 11 days for ESBL-E. coli.

Statement (conclusions)
PDS Plus® exhibits sustained in vitro antimicrobial activity against S. pseudintermedius, MRSP, E. coli and ESBL-E. coli. PDS Plus® could therefore reduce the prevalence of these wound infections in veterinary patients, although further studies are required to confirm this in vivo.

GENERAL PRACTITIONER AWARD

Owner perceptions of problem behaviours in dogs aged 6 months
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Objectives
To investigate early recognition of potentially problematic canine behaviours by UK and Republic of Ireland dog owners.

Methods
Puppy owners taking part in a longitudinal study relating to canine health and behaviour completed online questionnaires detailing their dogs’ responses to varied situations and experiences, and any canine behaviour(s) they found a problem.

Results
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In the questionnaire for 6-month old dogs, owners reported problem behaviours in 199/636 (31.3%) dogs. Of the 199 dogs, help had only been sought for 78 (39.2%); from dog trainers (57/199;28.6%), behaviourists (22/199;11.1%) and/or vets (9/199;4.5%).

Behaviours most commonly reported as problems were pulling on lead (26/199;13.1%), jumping up at people (22/199;11.1%), mouthing people (22/199;10.1%), and separation-related behaviour (SRB) (unwanted/undesirable behaviour in owner absence) (17/199;8.5%). Elsewhere in the 6-month questionnaire, data were available as to whether ‘jumping up at people’ and SRB were displayed. Despite not noting the behaviour as ‘a problem’, a further 128/621 (20.6%) of dogs were reported to have jumped up at people and 345/619 (55.7%) had shown SRB (≥2 signs were considered an accurate indication of SRB). Owners were more likely to report SRB than ‘jumping up at people’ as a problem, (OR=4.85, 95%CI 3.77-6.23, P=<0.0001).

Statement (conclusions)  
This study highlights behaviour(s) that owners of 6-month old dogs find problematic, thus enabling development of specific training plans to address these problems. Future work will include analysis of risk factors for owner-reporting of specific canine behaviours and assess escalation/resolution of specific behaviours in relation to perception of a problem and help sought.

MEDICINE AWARD

Core outcomes in feline Chronic Kidney Disease: what should we be measuring?  
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Objectives  
Over 100 different parameters are measured in the published treatment efficacy studies for cats with Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD), making it impossible to compare or combine the results of studies. Developing an agreed Core Outcome Set (COS) would resolve some of the issues as all future studies can use these when assessing treatment efficacy. The overall aim of this study was to create a COS for CKD in cats.

Methods  
Using a Delphi methodology, an anonymous, international panel of 73 stakeholders, including clinical experts, journal editors, regulatory agencies and cat owners, completed a series of online questionnaires to build consensus on the most important parameters to measure when treating cats with CKD. They were asked to rate the importance of parameters using Likert scales (1-9). Consensus was defined a priori as 80% of participants rating the parameter as 8 or 9. The study contained 3 rounds in total.

Results  
Response rate was between 78 and 95% across the first questionnaires, with 14 parameters reaching consensus for inclusion within the first round of the study. These included specific parameters from urine and serum tests, quality of life, survival time/renal survival end-point, IRIS stage and clinical examination.

Statement (conclusions)  
This research highlights the outcomes which all stakeholders consider important when making treatment decisions for cats with CKD. Including this COS in future clinical trials will ensure results will be relevant to both first opinion and referral practice, strengthening the evidence base available for decision making.

STUDENT AWARD

Patterns of antimicrobial resistance in canine wound infections from two large scale electronic datasets  
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Objectives  

Methods  
Two datasets of culture and sensitivity results from samples taken from wounds in dogs were retrospectively analysed. Dataset 1 (D1) was sourced from a commercial laboratory (2011-18), whilst dataset 2 (D2) was sourced from four laboratories compiled by the Small Animal Veterinary Surveillance Network (SAVSNET) (2010-2017). Statistical analyses were conducted using R language. Temporal trends were analysed following orthogonal polynomial and
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forward difference coding with either a mixed effects binomial logistic regression model (D1) when data included practice postcode to counteract clustering, or a binomial logistic regression model (D2).

Results
D1 contained 9302 samples, 5858 of which had specific bacteria isolated, whilst D2 contained 10,024 samples with bacterial species isolated. Significant \((p<0.05)\) temporal observations which correlated across both datasets were seen. There were reductions in both amoxicillin-clavulanic acid (D1 73.3% to 22.2%; D2 54.1% to 23.5%) and marbofloxacin (D1 59.1% to 23.8%; D2 51.4% to 19.7%) resistance in *Staphylococcus aureus* and enrofloxacin and marbofloxacin resistance (both D1 34.7% to 5.8%; D2 18.2% to 1.0%) in *Escherichia coli*. A reduction in multi-drug resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, defined as resistance to 3 or more antimicrobial categories, was also observed (D1 72.7% to 27.0%; D2 55.5% to 26.4%).

Statement (conclusions)
Significant observations in both datasets suggest a reduction in antimicrobial resistance in organisms recognised as nosocomial pathogens. This may reflect an increased awareness of antimicrobial resistance among practising vets and hence more Responsible use of antimicrobials.

VETERINARY NURSE AWARD

Indications for administration of gastroprotectant medications in hospitalised dogs and cats
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Objectives
To establish how frequently gastroprotectant medications are administered in a specialist veterinary hospital and the stated indications for their use.

Methods
A prospective, nurse-led survey was performed over a period of 9 weeks, including all dogs and cats referred to a specialist internal medicine clinic that were hospitalised for more than 24 hours. The use and dosages of gastroprotectant drugs were recorded; attending clinicians completed a questionnaire to establish indications for their use.

Results
Of 189 dogs and 58 cats hospitalised for more than 24 hours, 74 (39%) dogs and 24 (41%) cats received gastroprotectant drugs. Omeprazole was the drug administered most frequently in 50 dogs and 8 cats, all at a dose of 1 mg/kg twice daily. Among dogs, major stated indications included vomiting (44%), decreased appetite (20%), regurgitation (14%), gastrointestinal ulceration (10%), pancreatitis (8%), administration of glucocorticoids (8%), azotaemia (6%), haemorrhagic gastroenteritis (4%), and hepatic disease (4%). Ondansetron was prescribed at 1-2 mg/kg/day in 20 dogs and 1 cat. Among dogs, the major indications were nausea (55%), vomiting (35%), decreased appetite (25%), and pancreatitis (10%). Maropitant was prescribed at a dose of 1 mg/kg/day in 37 dogs and 8 cats. Indications in dogs included vomiting (46%), nausea (32%), decreased appetite (30%), whereas the major indication in cats was decreased appetite (50%).

Statement (conclusions)
There was considerable variation in the rationale for administration of gastroprotectant drugs, with no uniform pattern of prescribing. These results will inform development of guidelines for use of these drugs in veterinary practice.

POSTER AWARD

Key factors that influence an owner’s decision to feed their dog a senior diet
Elinor Tedds, Teresa Hollands
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Objectives
To determine what influences an owner’s decision to feed a senior diet. Few senior dogs in the UK are fed age-appropriate diets despite evidence that these dogs have reduced maintenance energy requirements, increased protein requirements and a reduced basal metabolic rate and that diet can be used to manage or treat age-related disease.
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Methods
A mixed methods questionnaire was distributed to dog owners via seven UK dog Facebook groups. Dogs age seven and over were classed as senior. Data analysis was carried out in Microsoft Excel.

Results
59% (n=214) of dogs in the study were classed as senior. Despite 27% of owners worrying about their dog’s ageing and 84% recognising that diseases such as obesity and diabetes can be supported by diet, only 25% of senior dogs were fed senior diets. Factors influencing this decision were if the dog was fed a commercial diet, if the owner was worried about their dog’s ageing, recognition that their dog’s nutritional requirements change, the provision of joint support within the diet, specific ingredients in the food and if the diet was ‘good quality’. 64% of owners thought glucosamine should be added to senior dog diets and 60% had spoken to their vet about nutrition of their dog.

Statement (conclusions)
Many owners speak to their vet about their dog’s diet, but few feed an age-appropriate diet. This highlights a missed opportunity for veterinarians to be more proactive in discussing diet with clients and to use diet in the treatment and prevention of disease.