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## **CALL FOR CASES: Cats with suspected cholangiohepatitis!**

The liver is an organ with many functions, including regulating many chemicals in blood, and producing a product called bile which helps to carry waste products from the liver. The liver's function is closely associated with the biliary system which stores bile, a substance that helps to break down dietary fat and helps eliminate waste products. The largest part of the biliary system is the gallbladder. Cholangiohepatitis is an inflammation of the liver and biliary system, and can be a chronic disease in cats that can reduce quality of life for the cat. This condition can affect any cat including domestic shorthairs but some breeds are more prone to this condition; including Burmese, Siamese, British Shorthair, Persian, and Norwegian Forest cats.

Currently, we know there are several types of cholangiohepatitis in cats. A liver biopsy is required to diagnose the condition and to optimize treatment. Magnetic resonance cholangiopancreatography (MRCP) is the imaging method of choice in human cases of an equivalent condition. It is a non-invasive test, and can avoid the requirement for biopsy in some humans with this condition.

Vets at Cambridge University would like to see if non-invasive MRCP adds any information to our current work up in these cholangiohepatitis cases, which might benefit future cats with the disease.

We are looking to recruit cats that vets think have liver and/or biliary disease. Cats may have symptoms of lethargy; poor appetite, vomiting, diarrhoea; and/or abdominal pain; the cats may have jaundice (yellow skin); or ascites (fluid in the abdomen). To confirm the patient is suitable for the trial, they must have had an increase in at least one liver enzyme on blood samples.

If suitable for the trial, cats would be admitted to QVSH\* for investigations that will probably include further blood tests and an ultrasound. If a liver biopsy would be recommended as part of the investigations, then your cat could be recruited into the trial to have an MRCP under the same anaesthetic as the planned liver biopsy. This would incur a slightly longer period of general anaesthesia, however it would not make a difference to the experience for the patient and the overall costs that you incur.

If another cause of the cat's symptoms is diagnosed, or if for some reason a liver biopsy is no longer recommended, the patient would not have an MRCP and would not continue to be part of the trial.

You would pay all costs for the standard investigations at QVSH as part of your cat's normal care, while the study grant will cover all additional costs incurred by the study, including the costs of the MRI, the general anaesthesia, and histopathology (the results of the biopsy). Current ball park estimates for consultation, bloodwork, ultrasound and general anaesthesia/liver biopsy is £4500, however individual estimates may vary and will be discussed with you prior to starting any investigations.

At admission, you would have time to discuss this study with the medicine clinician so you are fully informed. You would be required to sign a consent form for both the standard work up and also specifically for inclusion in this study.

At any point, you may withdraw your cat from the study. At all times, the patient will come first; so if there are any concerns that the study could have any detriment to any individual patient, the patient would be withdrawn.

\*Note that Dick White Referrals and Granta Veterinary Specialists are also centres accepting cases for this study.

**If you think your cat has cholangiohepatitis, please do discuss with your vet to see if your cat is suitable for the trial.**

If you or your vet have any questions regarding the study, please contact either Katie McCallum or Abby Caine to discuss further.