



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

News Release

Issued: Wednesday 16 May 2018

Vet physio clinic helps lame dogs find their feet again

A dog who was paralysed in his hind limbs is walking again thanks to pioneering physiotherapy treatment at a new dedicated clinic.

Calvin – a five year-old Staffordshire bull terrier cross – became paralysed after running around in the garden.

Vets suspected a sudden blockage of the blood vessels supplying the spinal cord to be responsible, a condition called fibrocartilaginous embolism, similar to a stroke seen in people.

As part of his treatment at the University of Edinburgh’s Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, he was referred to a new physiotherapy service at its Hospital for Small Animals.

The Royal (Dick) Edinburgh Physiotherapy Assessment & Intensive Rehabilitation (REPAIR) Centre offers cutting edge services, including hydrotherapy and sensory testing alongside traditional physiotherapy treatments.

Hydrotherapy takes place in an underwater treadmill housed in a glass tank. It has a walk-through design and is slowly filled with water until the animals’ legs are submerged.

Water may be used to support some of the pets’ bodyweight to facilitate movement, or to provide resistance to help promote strength and encourage muscle development. Lifejackets are worn at all times to ensure safety.

At first, Calvin was afraid of water and his owner feared he would not tolerate hydrotherapy.

Working with a specialist team, Calvin was gradually introduced to the tank and was soon plodding away on the underwater treadmill. At his last appointment, Calvin was walking unaided.

Calvin’s owner Joanna is delighted with his progress. She said: “I can't thank the Vet School enough for all the hard work and care they have put into helping Calvin get better. The recovery he has made over the last few months is incredible. He's pushed himself from day one with constant determination.”

Helena Carruthers, a Veterinary Physiotherapist at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, said: “Calvin is fortunate to have an extremely dedicated owner, who has been

Ranked among the top universities in the world

working hard to follow bespoke daily physiotherapy plans with him at home in addition to the expert treatment he has received from us. We are thrilled with the progress Calvin has made.”

The REPAIR Centre brings together specialists in orthopaedics, neurology and anaesthesia, as well as experts in nutrition and internal medicine, to ensure a holistic approach to animals’ rehabilitation after injury or illness.

John Ryan, a specialist in Small Animal Surgery and lecturer in Small Animal Orthopaedics at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, said: “By optimising outcomes for pets with difficulty walking, we are restoring and maintaining the quality of life for both pets and their owners.”

For more information please contact:

Jen Middleton, Press & PR Office, 0131 650 6514; 07795 640662; Jen.Middleton@ed.ac.uk