

Newsletter for

Referring Vets

SPRING 2022
ISSUE
13

Cardiology Service

New services, case studies and research update

The Behaviour Clinic

New referral service launched

Dick Vet Rabbit and Exotic Practice

Latest news on rabbit and reptile health

Clinical Club

Forthcoming CPD dates for vets and nurses



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
The Royal (Dick) School
of Veterinary Studies

Hospital for Small Animals

Welcome



Dear Colleagues,

Here we are, halfway through 2022, and some things are looking different from the last time I wrote this newsletter, but some are the same.

We are letting clients back into our reception, although we are still encouraging mask wearing. We are incredibly busy, just as every vet in the UK is – and for the same reasons – so please bear with us.

We are changing how we manage our communication with both our referring vets and our clients. We are in the process of recruiting 'client referral coordinators' who will act to make the referral journey more efficient for both the client and the referring vet. They will be answering the phones and are also contactable by email by referring vets, and, once that has happened and the case is accepted by us, will contact clients directly to organise appointments.

The front-of-house reception team are now back in the building and the client account team are 'back of house' dealing with the insurance side of things. This is a work in progress but should result in a smoother, more streamlined experience for everyone.

Please note that our free Clinical Club and Nurses Clinical Club will remain online for the near future, with each holding monthly CPD sessions. If you would like to be included in the mailing list for either of these Clubs, please email vet.marketing@ed.ac.uk confirming which subscription list you would wish to be added to.

We are still offering free advice, as we know that this is something vets in practice value. However, please be mindful that we are receiving many requests so we would appreciate it if you would make it easier for us to help you by:

- Calling during service hours where possible
- Giving a succinct history, and defined questions for the case
- Letting us know how to contact you, and when you are going to be available

With very best wishes to you and all of our other colleagues

Sue Murphy
Director of Clinical Services

Laura Blackwood joins Hospital

We are delighted to welcome Professor Laura Blackwood as Head of Oncology at the Hospital for Small Animals.

Laura is a highly respected and vastly experienced veterinary oncologist. As well as being a Diplomate of the European College and Veterinary Internal Medicine – Companion Animals (DipECVIM), Laura holds the European Radiation Oncology Add on Qualification and the RCVS Certificate in Veterinary Radiology. She has a Masters in Small Animal Oncology and a PhD researching thyroid cancer.



Laura Blackwood

Laura will lead our Oncology Service based at the Riddell-Swann Veterinary Cancer Centre, one of the largest oncology centres in Europe. Working with our existing team of oncology specialists, Laura will help to provide world-class care for pets diagnosed with cancer.

As a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, Laura will also contribute to the teaching of our undergraduate veterinary medicine students and help to train the next generation of veterinary oncologists.

Welcome to the team Laura!

Hot off the press!

We are pleased to announce Victoria Robinson DipECVD MRCVS is joining our Dermatology team at the Dick Vet. We look forward to Tori's start in late August.

Refer a case



0131 650 7651



hfsareception@ed.ac.uk



www.edin.ac/hfsa-referral-form

Cardiology Service: Looking forward after COVID

by Geoff Culshaw, Head of Cardiology Service

As COVID restrictions start to ease we, like the rest of our colleagues in the Hospital, are looking forward to meeting clients face-to-face again and expanding our referral service to meet the increasing demand.

During the multiple lockdowns, we were the only service in Scotland to offer interventional cardiac procedures such as pacemaker implantation, transvascular closure of PDA and balloon valvuloplasty for pulmonic stenosis. But we are acutely aware of the continued need to expand the range of clinical services we offer so that we can keep waiting times to a minimum.

EPIC clinics

We look forward to start running our EPIC clinics again later this year. These popular clinics screen older dogs with suspected mitral valve disease (MMVD) to determine whether they were likely to benefit from pimobendan. If an older dog is well but has a moderate intensity mitral murmur, we recommend that practitioners take a chest radiograph. If the vertebral heart score is >10.5 , practitioners will be able to refer the dog to our EPIC clinic for a reduced rate cardiac ultrasound scan.

Services for pets with congestive heart failure

Congestive heart failure is one of the commonest syndromes we treat here in dogs and cats. Once we stabilise these patients, we usually like to see them back at regular intervals. This has been tricky to achieve because of Covid and we are incredibly grateful to practitioners for doing many of the follow-up checks and discussing the cases with on by telephone or e-mail.

During lockdown, our cardiology nurse, Sara-Ann Dixon, achieved specialist cardiology technician status (VTS Cardiology) within the American Academy of Internal Medicine for Veterinary Technicians (AIMVT). This is a fantastic achievement and she hopes to set up a new congestive heart failure clinic later this year to provide support to owners and help try to keep their pets stable for as long as possible.

Research update

We have two exciting ongoing research studies. One of the cardiology residents, Maria-Ines Oliveira (see below), is investigating whether heart rates



Geoff Culshaw

measured by owners with smartphone technology can be used to accurately determine heart rate control in dogs with atrial

fibrillation. If they do, these could really revolutionise how we optimise heart rate control in these patients.

We also have a new MSc student, Marco Mazzarella, who is investigating vascular function in pet dogs. Vascular function is so important in people, but the role it plays mediating cardiac and other diseases, and the clinical signs they cause is not known. Marco is funded by Petsavers and the Kennel Club Charitable Trust, and is using wire myography to measure how well arteries around the body contract and relax. This is the first time this has been performed on tissue from pet dogs and would not be possible without the kind donation made by owners after their pets have sadly passed away.



Further info visit
the Cardiology webpages
<https://edin.ac/3KvHucZ>

Case Study: Cardiology

Sophie, a 19-month-old dachshund, was referred to the Cardiology Service for investigation of a heart murmur that was incidentally found when she was checked before being neutered.

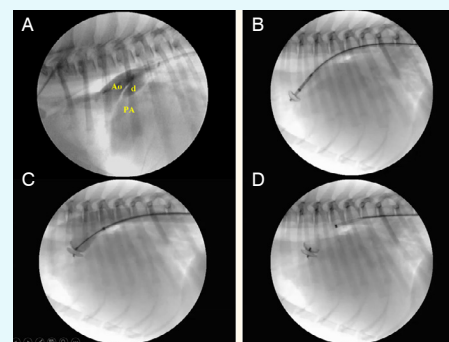
She was diagnosed with a patent ductus arteriosus (PDA). The ductus arteriosus is a normal structure in the foetus, allowing blood to bypass the lungs, which are not yet being used for oxygenation. The vessel normally closes shortly after birth but can sometimes remain open, as was the case with Sophie. If not addressed, it invariably causes congestive heart failure.



Sophie has made a full recovery and has an excellent prognosis.

The treatment of choice for this disease is the occlusion of the abnormal vessel with an Amplatzer Canine Duct Occluder (ACDO). This is a key-hole surgery, performed through a small incision in Sophie's leg. Using long catheters from the femoral artery, the device was positioned and deployed within the PDA, occluding it from the inside.

Within 10 minutes of deploying the device, the PDA was completely occluded. Sophie went home the next day with a very small wound in her inner thigh. She now has an excellent prognosis.



- In PDA, the ductus (d) should close at birth but remains open, connecting the aorta (Ao) to the main pulmonary artery (PA)
- We insert a long catheter across the PDA from the femoral artery. You can see the ACDO just protruding from the end of the catheter in the main pulmonary artery
- Once deployed within the PDA, contrast is injected to show that the PDA has been blocked
- The ACDO is unscrewed from its delivery cable and left in place

Research: Cardiology

Can smartphone technology accurately measure heart rates in dogs?



AliveCor monitor and smartphone technology may be an alternative for patients.



The Cardiology Service is trying to find alternative ways of monitoring dogs with atrial fibrillation.

Atrial fibrillation is a relatively frequent arrhythmia in dogs with heart disease and contributes to poor clinical outcome because of inappropriately high heart rates. A cornerstone of therapeutic management is to decrease the overall heart rate, which can be managed and monitored by using 24h electrocardiograms (Holter exams).

Many cases will need more than one Holter exam to achieve appropriate heart rates, which can be financially prohibitive for many dog owners. Additionally, to fit the Holter device, the dog needs to travel to the vet hospital each time he has an exam, which can add stress to both dog and owner.

New technology

The Cardiology Service is conducting a study to develop a protocol of heart rate measurements taken by owners in the home environment (using smartphone technology and the AliveCor® monitor) and testing it against the Holter exam (considered the gold-standard) in dogs with Atrial fibrillation. This will eventually aim to help dogs that will not tolerate repeated Holter exams.

Can you help?

The cardiology team is currently recruiting any dog diagnosed with atrial fibrillation, provided that the dog can tolerate the Holter exam. Dogs whose data can be used for the study will receive the Holter exam free of charge.

The study will be carried out by Maria Ines Oliveira (senior clinical training scholar) and her supervisors (Yolanda Martinez Pereira and Geoff Culshaw). The study has been approved by the Veterinary Ethical Review Committee of the R(D)SVS.



If you would like one of your patients to take part in this study, please email:
Maria Ines Oliveira (sahcard@exseed.ed.ac.uk)

Innovation:

Internal Medicine

Vets design innovative fluoroscopy solution

An innovative device designed by a group of our vets at the Hospital for Small Animals has improved the practicalities and safety issues associated with conducting fluoroscopy procedures.

Fluoroscopy is a non-invasive imaging technique that produces continuous images displayed on a monitor, similar to an X-ray movie. Conducting fluoroscopy procedures on animals is difficult, as the patients need to stand still on their own so that staff are not exposed to the electromagnetic waves used in the procedure.

To solve this problem, our specialist Internal Medicine Service team designed a unique acrylic box for animals to stand in during swallow studies. As the box has no metal components, it gives clear images, allowing the animal to stand and eat comfortably.

Clinical success

Our Internal Medicine Service demonstrated the multiple benefits of their innovative fluoroscopy container recently when Gary, a three-year-old pug, was referred to our Hospital suffering from severe abdominal cramping. The team was concerned that he might have gastric acid reflux or a hiatal hernia, so conducted some swallow studies using the Hospital's fluoroscope.

Gary remained calm and relaxed in the fluoroscopy container throughout the procedure and the vets were able to diagnose some acid reflux, but nothing else untoward. He is now receiving treatment for his reflux and is doing well.



Gary in swallow box



Swallow box

The Behaviour Clinic

New referral service available to treat behaviour problems in cats and dogs

The Behaviour Clinic was launched within the Hospital for Small Animals in March 2021 and is already extremely busy with cases from Scotland and the North of England. The service is led by Dr Kevin McPeake, one of a handful of European and RCVS recognised specialists in veterinary behavioural medicine in the UK and the only one in Scotland.

The Behaviour Clinic is a referral-only clinic, seeing cases referred by veterinarians for the assessment and treatment of behaviour problems arising in dogs and cats. The clinic is currently offering remote video consultations but plans to resume face-to-face consultations later in 2022.

Common reasons for referral include:

- Aggressive behaviours shown towards people/other animals
- Noise sensitivities
- Separation-related problems
- Fears/anxieties/phobias
- House soiling problems
- Abnormal repetitive behaviours/compulsive disorders
- Problems relating to old age (incl. cognitive dysfunction)
- Overgrooming in cats

The Clinic is also happy to see any cases where psychotropic medication is being considered as part of treatment for a behaviour problem and can provide guidance on the selection and use of this treatment modality.

Veterinary referrals

Medical problems, especially painful conditions, commonly cause or contribute to the development and maintenance of behaviour problems, hence the importance of patients at the Behaviour Clinic only being seen on veterinary referral. The team of specialists within the Hospital for Small Animals allows more complex cases to be explored by experts in other disciplines when needed.

The Behaviour Clinic team is more than happy to discuss cases with any vets looking to refer a patient.

The team at the Behaviour Clinic are delighted to welcome Dr Amy Miele, who has begun her residency in veterinary behavioural medicine, the first residency of this type in Scotland. Amy is also the Programme Director of the online MSc Clinical Animal Behaviour and has broad experience as a veterinarian, including seeing her own behaviour cases. Amy will be taking a lead role in seeing cases under the supervision of Kevin from autumn 2022, which will increase the Clinic's capacity to receive referrals in the future.



Amy Miele

Forthcoming CPD event

Kevin McPeake from the Behaviour Clinic is giving a free online seminar for vets and vet nurses on 5 October 2022, titled 'Medication for fear of fireworks.' There are also plans to provide CPD courses on behavioural medicine from 2023.

The Behaviour Clinic is happy to discuss cases with any vets looking to refer a patient.



Kevin McPeake



Reserve your place!

CPD event 5 Oct
<https://edin.ac/3F5juMU>



Further info visit

Behaviour Clinic webpages
<https://edin.ac/3vzxP0K>



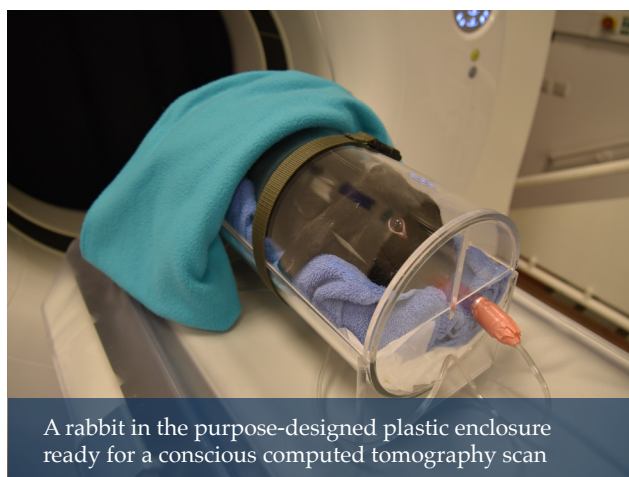
The Dick Vet has joined LinkedIn, where we post information on upcoming CPD, sharing postgraduate courses, covering clinical research, featuring alumni successes and much more. If you'd like to follow us then please search for us, or go to www.linkedin.com/company/TheDickVet.

Dick Vet Rabbit and Exotic Practice

Conscious Computed Tomography (CT) Scans in Rabbits

The team at the Dick Vet Rabbit and Exotic Practice (DVREP) have developed a reliable and stress-reducing way to perform Computed Tomography CT scans in rabbit patients, without the need for sedation or general anaesthesia. This is particularly advantageous in rabbits that are debilitated and therefore at an increased anaesthetic risk. It also allows us to offer outpatient appointments for consultation, medical assessment, conscious computed tomography scan and discharge of patients with a follow-up phone consultation to discuss results and treatment options.

CT scanning is the gold standard imaging modality for thorough evaluation of respiratory tract disease, dental disease and ear disease. As the scans incorporate the whole body, the musculoskeletal system and abdominal viscera are concurrently evaluated.



A rabbit in the purpose-designed plastic enclosure ready for a conscious computed tomography scan

Reptile Reproductive Disease



Peri-operative image of a tortoise undergoing surgery for follicular stasis via a plastrotoomy

Follicular stasis and egg binding in reptile patients can be extremely dangerous. In most cases, inadequate husbandry is the biggest predisposing factor. For the 'sick' reptile, attention to detail is important, and a thorough history should be taken with any inappropriate temperature ranges, UV-b lighting provisions, humidity levels, substrate choices, diet and supplements being addressed and corrected.

Faecal parasites are also particularly common in tortoises, geckos and bearded dragons and we recommend a minimum of once yearly faecal screening in reptile patients. High parasite burdens can lead to anorexia and weight loss.

Where reproductive disease is suspected, ultrasonography or radiography can determine if follicles or eggs are present. In cases that do not respond to husbandry improvements and medical therapy, surgical intervention may be required. We regularly have reptiles referred for both medical investigation and surgical treatment.



Further info visit

Dick Vet Rabbit and Exotic Practice webpages
<https://edin.ac/3Gc96SI>

Rabbit Ear Disease

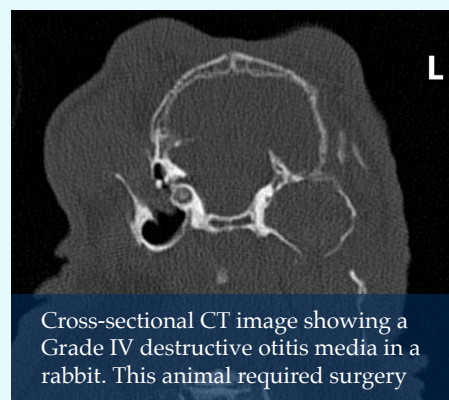
We are seeing increasing numbers of rabbits with otitis externa leading to secondary otitis media, with a higher prevalence in lop-eared breeds.

As part of every clinical examination, an otoscope examination of the distal external ear canal and palpation of the ear bases for any swelling should be included.

We routinely perform cytology of the external ear canals to assess the level of otitis externa present and work with our Dermatology Team to create treatment

plans specific for the individual patient. This can include endoscopic-assisted ear flushing under general anaesthetic.

Computed tomography (CT) scanning permits early diagnosis of otitis media. Where otitis externa and media are advanced, partial ear canal ablation and lateral bulla osteotomy may be required. Subtle clinical signs of otitis media can include: facial asymmetry, absent palpebral reflex, unilateral dental disease and recurring gastrointestinal stasis episodes.



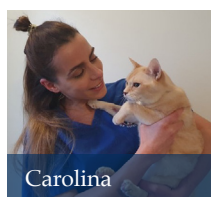
Cross-sectional CT image showing a Grade IV destructive otitis media in a rabbit. This animal required surgery

Staff Successes

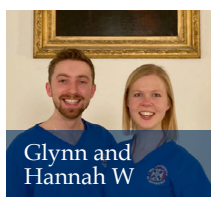
We are immensely proud of our entire team of clinicians, RVNs, ACA and admin staff at our hospital. Their knowledge, expertise and dedication to deliver gold standard animal care is incredible.

Congratulations to the following clinicians and vet nurses who are celebrating following recent exam success.

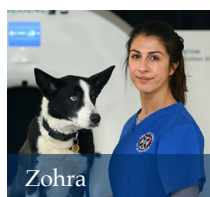
- Carolina Albuquerque, Hannah Walker and Glynn Woods have become Diplomates of the European College of Veterinary Internal Medicine for Companion Animals (DipECVIM-CA).
- Zohra Khan has become a Diplomate of the European College of Veterinary Neurology (ECVN).
- Hannah Leigh has become a Diplomate of the European College of Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia (ECVAA).
- Ingrid Tundo has become a Diplomate of the European Veterinary Dental College (EVDC), the only EVDC Diplomat in Scotland.
- Emily Gorman, one of our senior emergency and critical care nurses has achieved VTS (ECC) accreditation. Emily, along with her colleague Lindsay Ashburner are the only two RVNs in Scotland to hold this qualification.



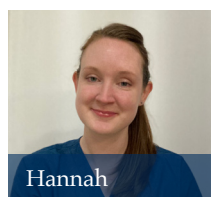
Carolina



Glynn and Hannah W



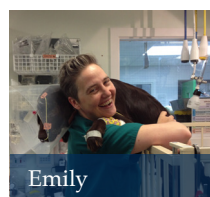
Zohra



Hannah



Ingrid



Emily

2022 Clinical Club Dates

The Dick Vet Clinical Club and Nurses Clinical Club hold monthly free online CPD webinars. We ask that you book a place, and a link will be sent to you prior to the session. For booking information visit: www.ed.ac.uk/vet/BookClinicalClub

Dick Vet Clinical Club CPD



Laura Blackwood Head of Oncology
Approach to the cancer patient



Melanie Gilchrist - Veterinary Physiotherapist
What can our Physiotherapy Service do for You



Alisdair Boag - Senior Lecturer in Small Animal Internal Medicine
Hypoadrenocorticism (Addison's): It doesn't have to be stressful!



Kevin McPeake - Lecturer in Clinical Animal Behaviour
Medication for fear of fireworks



Kiterie Faller - Senior Lecturer in Veterinary Neurology
Non-infectious encephalitis in dogs and cats



Paola Cazzini - Lecturer in Veterinary Clinical Pathology
The Clue is in the drop: what can your blood smear tell you

Dick Vet Nurses Clinical Club CPD



Lucy Speak - Veterinary Nurse
Blood transfusions in small animals to include; indications for blood transfusion, administration, typing and reactions



Sarah Ann Dickson - Cardiology Nurse
ECG for nurses - What does that squiggle mean?



Olivia Salazar- Anaesthesia Nurse
Basics of mechanical ventilation for dogs and cats



Fiona McDowall - Senior Veterinary Nurse – Oncology
Communication techniques and the grieving process



Hayley Gowan - Veterinary Nurse
Scoping from the waist up: a nurse's guide to scoping the upper and lower respiratory tract



Jess Randall - Exotics Nurse
General anaesthesia in exotic animals

The Hospital for Small Animals is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We are home to a wide range of veterinary specialists with access to outstanding world-class facilities.

- Anaesthesia Service
- Behaviour Clinic
- Cardiology Service
- Dermatology Service
- Diagnostic Imaging Service
- Emergency and Critical Care Service
- Feline Medicine Service
- Internal Medicine Service
- Neurology and Neurosurgery Service
- Oncology Service
- Ophthalmology Service
- Orthopaedic Surgery Service
- Rabbit and Exotic Pets Service
- REPAIR (Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Service)
- Soft Tissue Surgery Service



Further info visit

The Specialist Services webpages.
<https://edin.ac/39dND0I>

