



Canine Epilepsy Studies at the Animal Health Trust

Scientists and clinicians at the Animal Health Trust (www.aht.org.uk) are embarking on an exciting project to investigate the genetic basis of epilepsy in the Dog. By combining the expertise of the clinicians to diagnose dogs with idiopathic epilepsy and state of the art genetic research capability we hope to identify the genetic factors involved. If the research is successful the end product will be a DNA test that can identify the risk of developing the condition and passing it on to future generations.

At the moment we are in the initial stages and the project is likely to take several years to complete but the first, and arguably most important, step is DNA sample collection. Once sufficient samples have been collected we will analyse genetic markers distributed evenly across the dogs genome to identify those that are shared by all affected dogs and different from those carried by dogs that don't suffer from epilepsy. These markers will point us to the region(s) of the DNA that contains mutation(s) that are responsible for causing epilepsy. Once we have determined the region of DNA that contains the mutations we can undertake additional experiments to identify the mutations themselves.

If we are to be successful we need DNA samples from dogs affected with idiopathic epilepsy and their close relatives, and also from unaffected dogs. The DNA can be provided as a blood sample (if blood is being drawn from your dog for another purpose) or as a simple cheek swab. We would also appreciate a pedigree of all dogs that donate a sample so we can understand how the samples we collect are related to one another. This will help us to understand the mode of inheritance of the condition and how many genes are involved.

All research is undertaken in complete confidence. The identity of all samples submitted to the research effort will be kept confidential and the results from individual dogs will only be shared with the dog's owner(s), once the research has been completed.

We are collecting DNA samples from dogs that are:

- Affected with idiopathic epilepsy
- Closely related to a dog that is affected with idiopathic epilepsy
- Unaffected with epilepsy and over 7 years of age

If you have a dog or dogs that meet any of the above criteria then we would very much appreciate a sample from them. To request a free swab kit or sample submission form please contact our sample manager, Bryan McLaughlin (bryan.mclaughlin@aht.org.uk) indicating the number of kits you require and your full postal address.

You will need to complete the sample submission form that is included in the swab kit and if your dog is affected please provide us with as much information about your dog's epilepsy as you can.

It helps us to know:

- The age at which your dog developed epilepsy
- How often he / she has a seizure
- How long the seizures last
- What tests or scans your dog has had to determine or rule out possible causes of the epilepsy

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in this project, and if you have any more questions please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Many Thanks

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