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

Cholangiohepatitis is a common chronic disease in cats, causing waxing and waning clinical signs that may cause significant reduction in quality of life for the cat. Currently, we know there are several subtypes of cholangiohepatitis recognised in cats, and these require a liver biopsy to diagnose as part of a general work up also involving blood tests and ultrasound. Liver biopsy is currently essential to obtain a definitive diagnosis and helpful to optimize treatment for the cats.

Magnetic resonance cholangiopancreatography (MRCP) is the imaging method of choice in these human cases. It is performed non-invasively, using the inherent sensitivity of MRI to distinguish the fluid in the biliary tract from the soft tissue surrounding it. No contrast media needs to be injected to acquire these images. We would like to see if non-invasive MRCP provides any additional useful diagnostic information to our current work up in these cholangiohepatitis cases, with the longer term hope that it might obviate the need for liver biopsy in some cases.

We are looking to recruit cats with a clinical suspicion of biliary tract disease with history of waxing and waning or chronic clinical signs including one or more of, but not restricted to: lethargy; anorexia; vomiting; diarrhoea; abdominal pain; vomiting; jaundice; ascites. There must be elevation of at least one liver enzyme on blood samples.

These cats would be admitted to QVSH for a standard work up for the suspicion of hepatobiliary disease, to include full bloodwork and an abdominal ultrasound. Providing a liver biopsy would be recommended as part of the standard clinical work up for the hepatobiliary disease, although of course the owner would be under no obligation to agree to this. If they decline liver biopsy, then the cat will not be enrolled on the trial and work-up and treatment would be continued as normal. If they agree to biopsy, then the patient would 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 (estimated 20-30 minutes).

Cases would be excluded if another cause of the clinical signs is identified, such as lymphoma; or if on further examination it turns out that the cat is not well enough to undergo an anaesthetic or liver biopsy, or if a liver biopsy is no longer recommended.

The owner would pay all costs for the standard investigations at QVSH as part of their normal care, however the cost of the histopathology for the biopsy and the MRI and additional general anaesthesia time would be covered by the study grant. Current ball park estimates for consultation, bloodwork, ultrasound and general anaesthesia/liver biopsy is £4500, however individual estimates may vary and will be discuss with the owners prior to starting any investigations.

There is a grant to cover any additional costs incurred by the study, including the costs of the MRI, the additional general anaesthesia time, and histopathology.

At admission, owners would have time to discuss this study with the medicine clinician so they are fully informed. They 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, the owner may withdraw their cat from the study.

It is important to note that 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. This study has received ethical approval from both the RCVS and Cambridge university.

**If you think you have a patient who may be suitable for the study, with owners motivated to pursue investigations for cholangiohepatitis, please do consider referral to QVSH, where the clinician can discuss if your patient is suitable for the trial.**

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