

We asked whether owners had expressed concerns that their pets had Covid-19 and whether veterinarians had tried to test pets for SARS-CoV-2. Answers to these questions prompted further questions (supplementary data – available online at <https://veterinaryrecord.bmj.com/content/186/18>). Fifty veterinarians completed the survey between 10 and 16 May 2020, which was approved by the Indiana University institutional review board.

Thirty veterinarians (60 per cent) reported seeing owners concerned that their pets had Covid-19. Concerned owners' pets included four dogs, eight cats and 18 with both dogs and cats. Most veterinarians (44) did not think any pet had Covid-19. Six veterinarians thought a pet may have been infected. Five of these did not obtain a test, with two of these noting the difficulty of obtaining a test. One veterinarian tested one cat, noting cost concerns. Most concerned owners (25 of 30; 83 per cent) said their pet had no known contact with a Covid-19 patient. Five veterinarians indicated that concerned owners' pets had been in contact with someone who had tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 or who was suspected of having Covid-19.

Based on veterinarians' clinical opinions, Covid-19 in pets appears uncommon.

However, as six veterinarians (12 per cent) thought a pet may have had Covid-19, some diagnoses may be missed. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has established guidelines for SARS-CoV-2 in pets.² It is possible that if test criteria were less stringent and if subsidies were available for tests more pets would be tested. A solution is for authorised facilities to test potentially infected pets and for research funds to be used for testing costs. Pets that test positive, in-contact animals and in-contact humans would be followed for a designated period after testing. Data collected on a few thousand animals would answer questions surrounding transmission between people and pets.

Sixty-seven per cent of US and 40 per cent of UK households have a pet and they are important family members to most owners.^{3,4}

Diagnosing SARS-CoV-2 infections

CORONAVIRUS

Owner concerns that pets have Covid-19

SEVERAL pet dogs and cats have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 worldwide.¹ However, the prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 in pets remains unknown and restrictions to testing in many countries have likely resulted in missed diagnoses.

We undertook a nationwide convenience survey of US veterinarians to estimate owners concerns about their pets and Covid-19.

in pets is important to understanding transmission between pets, people and, possibly, wildlife. Identifying infection is also important to allay owners' concerns and to facilitate appropriate medical treatment of pets.

Katharine M Watson, Yijia Zhang,

epidemiologists

Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics,
Indiana University School of Public Health, 1025
E 7th Street, Bloomington, IN 47405, USA

email: kamiwats@iu.edu

Kristine Towns, practitioner

Frankfort Animal Hospital, Frankfort, IN 46041,
USA

Ka Kahe, professor

Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology
and Department of Epidemiology, Columbia
University Irving Medical Center, New York,
NY 10032, USA

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- 2 CDC. Coronavirus disease 2019. Evaluation for SARS-CoV-2 testing in animals. 2020. www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/veterinarians.html (accessed 4 June 2020)
- 3 Insurance Information Institute. Facts + statistics: pet statistics. 2020. www.iii.org/fact-statistic/facts-statistics-pet-statistics (accessed 4 June 2020)
- 4 Statista. Leading pets owned by households in the United Kingdom (UK) 2018/19. 2019. www.statista.com/statistics/308218/leading-ten-pets-ranked-by-household-ownership-in-the-united-kingdom-uk (accessed 4 June 2020)

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