

New Technologies and Genetics Research Advance Canine Cancer Efforts

By Wayne Jensen, DVM, PhD, MBA, Chief Scientific Officer, Morris Animal Foundation
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As many dog owners know, cancer is a grave threat to their pet's health. Half of all dogs will face cancer during their lifetime, and one in four will die of the disease. For some breeds, such as Greyhounds, who frequently suffer from osteosarcoma, the risk is even higher.

Morris Animal Foundation launched its Canine Cancer Campaign in 2007 to fund research to prevent, treat and, ultimately, cure this disease in dogs. Through the campaign, the nonprofit organization is currently funding more than 25 canine cancer studies. Studies completed last year yielded a number of promising results, particularly in the areas of treatment and genetics.

Testing New Technologies in the Battle against Cancer

Conventional chemotherapy drugs improve cancer survival rates but can also cause notable side effects, such as vomiting, diarrhea and low white blood cell counts. A study at Colorado State University evaluated metronomic therapy, a novel method of administering chemotherapy that involves frequent, low-level doses of chemotherapy rather than higher doses given at longer intervals.

With Morris Animal Foundation funding, investigators determined that metronomic dosing of the drug cyclophosphamide is safe and may be effective in treating dogs with soft-tissue sarcomas. The treatment decreased the blood supply to the tumor in the treated dogs, and 8 of the 10 dogs treated experienced zero

tumor growth during the four-week study period. In addition, none of the dogs experienced significant side effects. Results of this study indicate that metronomic chemotherapy could significantly decrease side effects and may increase survival rates of dogs with cancer.

Another study looked at treatments for lymphoma, one of the most common cancers in dogs. Chemotherapy often produces a good initial response, but relapse is common and survival is usually less than two years after diagnosis. A new technology, nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, has been used successfully in humans to identify tumor biomarkers, which are substances produced by cancer cells.



With Morris Animal Foundation funding, researchers at Colorado State University used this new technology to measure whether metabolites (or their changing values after the first dose of chemotherapy) could predict a dog's initial response to therapy, remission times or long-term survival. They discovered that the lymph nodes of canine lymphoma patients have the same types of

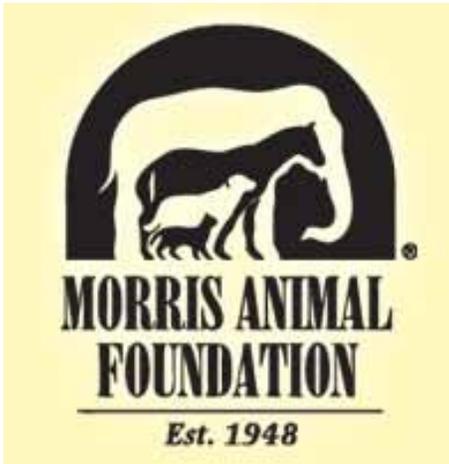
metabolites found in human cancers—and in people, these biomarkers are known to have prognostic and therapeutic significance. This new information about lymphoma is not only needed to find new therapeutic targets during drug development, but it could also help in the immediate evaluation of a patient's treatment response and allow modification of therapy according to that early response. Furthermore, the investigators will use this information to evaluate the usefulness of advanced imaging techniques for determining early treatment response noninvasively.

Playing the Genetics Card

The Canine Cancer Campaign goes beyond treatment. It has long been known that some breeds have a predisposition to develop certain cancers—such as osteosarcoma in Greyhounds, lymphoma and

continued from page 1

hemangiosarcoma in Golden Retrievers and melanoma in Scottish Terriers. Through the campaign, scientists are zeroing in on genetic factors that may predispose dogs to certain cancers. Morris Animal Foundation's goal is to dramatically reduce the occurrence of and mortality from canine cancer in the near future.



A number of studies last year looked at the genetic links associated with different cancer types. Melanoma, a highly aggressive, often fatal cancer, is often resistant to radiation therapy, and recurrence rates are high. Several genes have been identified that play a role in radiation resistance in human melanomas, so veterinary researchers have hypothesized that the same would be true for animals. A recent study evaluated three genes in canine melanomas to determine their effects on radiation sensitivity. The researchers' most exciting finding was that melanoma cells produce receptors for one gene, indicating that blocking these receptors could slow cellular growth in cancer cells. In addition, using a drug that blocks the receptor enhances the effects of radiation. This previously unreported pathway in canine melanoma holds promise for developing new therapeutic strategies for this cancer.

Bone cancer, which is thought to be an inherited disease resulting from several gene mutations, is the most common cause of death in Irish Wolfhounds. Scientists from the Animal Health Trust in the United Kingdom identified a region on the X chromosome that seems to show an association with osteosarcoma and warrants further investigation. The

researchers also tested a new method for finding gene defects that lead to the development of many complex diseases, including cancer. Further research in this area would help breeders reduce the number of dogs at risk of developing osteosarcoma through more informed breeding practices and could provide insight into new treatments for affected dogs.

Campaign funding also helped researchers continue to populate a tumor tissue bank with samples of lymphoma, melanoma, osteosarcoma, hemangiosarcoma, mast cell tumors, soft-tissue sarcomas and pulmonary tumors. More than 1,500 samples have been collected—the goal being 3,000—from seven universities: Michigan State University, University of Wisconsin, University of Missouri, Colorado State University, Tufts University, University of California–Davis and Ohio State University. Researchers can now use this tool to study various cancers.

New developments like these are taking place all the time, and each one brings us one step closer to better preventions, treatments and, one day, a cure.

To learn more, visit www.CureCanineCancer.org.

Veterinary Pet Insurance Co. Cancer Claims

Between 2003 and 2009, VPI received many pet cancer claims. The 10 most common pet cancers by claims were:

- 1) Lymphosarcoma - 34457
- 2) Mast Cell Tumor - 19249
- 3) **Bone Cancer - 10120**
- 4) Cancer of the Eyelid - 7696
- 5) Cancer of the Spleen - 7283
- 6) Liver Cancer - 6198
- 7) Fibrosarcoma - 552
- 8) Cancer of the Thorax - 5289
- 9) Oral Cancer - 4362
- 10) Hemangiopericytoma (a tumor generally arising on a limb) - 4351

Bone cancer turned out to be the most expensive form of cancer, costing policy holders an average of \$2304 per claim. Policy holders also all spent more than \$51.2 million between 2003 and 2009 treating these top 10 cancerous conditions.

continued from page 3

friendly. A new product launched earlier in 2010 is the Bokashi Pet Cycle system. This pet waste disposal system is based on the fermentation of waste matter. "Fermentation is a quick and safe way to rapidly transform pet waste into a product that restores nutrients and microbes to the soil and at the same time eliminates pet waste odor, diverts pet waste away from the landfill and removes the risk of toxoplasmosis and other parasites getting into city water supplies, according to Dr. Larry Green, MD, founder of Bokashicycle and the inventor of this system. "It works by using a specially formulated accelerant that rapidly degrades the pet waste when combined with a culture mix in an anaerobic fermenter. It takes as much time to place the waste in the fermenter as it does to scoop it into a waste bag. It's hardly time consuming and the smell is similar to that of pickles or cider vinegar." They guarantee that the fermenter will kill bacteria. It is a good choice for people concerned about the environment.

Another good option is a canine septic tank styled system. They've been around for a long time but are getting more attention today by local community services because they are in ground and can be used in every part of the country regardless of the type of soil or weather conditions. Home owners are also placing pet stations with bag dispensers and waste disposal united in their own backyards for convenience and cleanliness. The station poop bags are degradable too.

And last but not least, if you don't want to have anything to do with any of the above, hire a poop-scooping service to do your dirty work. The last decade has seen the emergence of many of these services with quirky names such as The Poop Butler, Poop 911, etc. Fees and services vary and some have even started to include pet walking. Talk to some of the pet waste removal service companies in your area and see if they'll purchase an ad in your newsletter or on your website or give discounts to greyhound owners!

Dealing with pet waste is one those topics that every pet owner must deal with but no one likes to talk about. Spring is a greyt time to look into all these products and services and find the one that will help you and your dogs stay clean!

Did you know?

GPA National sold 2006-2009 inventory of GPA Christmas ornaments in Nov. & Dec. and netted \$647.04

4

2011 GPA Annual Meeting in Orlando

We had a very productive meeting in Orlando! And it was greyt meeting many new officers that we've corresponded with by email but have never met in person!

If your chapter did not attend we'll be mailing the committee reports and the Treasurer's report out to the President of your chapter.

Congratulations to Jim Shofstahl of GPA N CA for being elected as the new GPA Nat. VP and to Vicki Phanco of GPA – Springfield, MO for being elected as the GPA Nat. Treas. We look forward to working with Jim and Vicki and know they'll be greyt additions as national officers.



National officers Alane Shultz, Vicki Phanco, Tonya Bader, John Parker & Rory Goree

The entire Policy and Procedure Manual was edited and approved and will be available soon. There will be a few proposed Bylaw changes coming in 2011.

If you have someone in your chapter that would be a good possibility to serve as a Public Relations Director for GPA National we'd be interested in talking to them.

Due to the length of the business meeting we didn't have much time for sharing ideas regarding fundraising or promoting greyhound adoption. However, we did hear a greyt success story from GPA WI Sheryl Clouse about their annual Gala which netted them \$30,000! This is a one day event. Sheryl shared her information with everyone and we'll be getting this in writing to share with everyone that wasn't there.



Break time during business meeting

Another awesome and affordable fresh promotional idea came from GPA LA/MS. They had some yard signs (real estate size signs) designed and produced. They place these signs in new adopter front yards. They then rotate them around to other adopter yards every few months. This is certainly an idea that your chapter might want to look into and think about doing.

Thanks to everyone that made the effort to attend. We hope to have bigger and better national meetings in the future!

Websites Can Increase Adoptions!

By Tonya Beader

Back in 1998, my Tampa Bay group was discussing our AOL community's site with our webmaster. A couple of us were inquiring of him his opinion of getting a more permanent, dedicated site to help promote our greys. His reply was "no one will ever use the internet to find a pet." His opinion was not unlike many at that time, but the incredible advance of web technology over the past decade and a half has placed instant access to the internet in nearly everyone's hands, whether it is from desktops, laptops, or most recently, tablets and smartphones. People everywhere now have the ability to gain instant access to information, shopping, banking, and pretty much anything else you can think of via the internet...including access to information about our Chapters and our organization as a whole. Our group constantly hears that we were located via "googling" greyhound adoptions, and 99% of all our applications are submitted online via our website. Chances are that most of yours are too. The upside to this is that we can reach far more people and far more greyhounds are

capable of being seen for the first time via our websites. We now have the ability to educate the masses, so to speak, about what incredible pets greyhounds are to a far greater degree than ever before, so are we doing right by our greys in keeping our sites current and up to date? Are we keeping our correct information and calendars readily available?

Are we taking full advantage of this amazing "instant access" to our programs and our hounds?

A couple of years ago, some of our Tampa Bay Board members attended a Petfinder seminar, and discovered that the biggest complaint most people had when searching for a new family pet was out of date information on websites. Bad contact numbers, pets still listed that were already adopted, and websites that looked as if they hadn't been touched in months or even years actually DETERRED people from further inquiring about the possibility of adoption. Take a look at your Chapter website: do any of the above apply? When was the last time you gave your site even a minor facelift? Are you fully utilizing the biggest source of potential adoptions to your advantage? In looking to the future, one thing seems fairly certain: the internet will not go away-it will likely only get bigger, with even more capabilities to easily promote and educate people about our greys...are we doing right by those entrusted to us in giving them the best possible introduction to the public? Are we making our sites stand out so that people are encouraged to visit repeatedly when considering their choices for a four legged companion? If not, then are we missing adoptions? Most likely the answer is yes.

At a time when greyhound awareness and adoption is reaching its most critical point ever, please don't forget how important your Chapter website is, and how it presents to the public. It could be one of your Chapter's very best tools in finding your hounds their forever homes.



This pic of Divy on the GPA website has generated lots of interest

Spring 2011 Greyhound Gatherings

8th Annual Sandy Paws Greyhound Gathering

March 2 – 6, 2011, Jekyll Island, GA

Get all the details for this event at www.sandypaws.org/index.php?page=1&article=15&gallery=0

13th Annual Greyhounds in Gettysburg Gathering - April 29 to May 1, 2011 in

Gettysburg, PA

Get all the details at

www.greyhoundsingettysburg.com/

GIG registration opened in January and there has been a wonderful response so far. This year there will be five seminars on Saturday. They will be starting at 11:30, and run through the end of the day. Seminars include Dr. Hague or Sami Abate and there is a new animal communicator who will be speaking Friday, and will also have a spot in the vendor area for personal readings. Her name is Jean Ussery and her contact information is on the website on the seminar page. Lee Livingood, renowned author of “Retired Racing Greyhounds for Dummies”, will be speaking on Saturday. She has a wealth of knowledge to share on the behavior of retired hounds and you will never tire of listening to her advice. Beverly Sebastian, founder of the Prison Greyhound Project, will also be speaking. Your WHOLE family is invited and be sure to include your skin kids. There will be the ever popular nose raffle for them. There will be a first, second and third place Toys R Us gift cards for the winners as well as another great collection of consolation prizes that will be there for the taking.

And be sure not to forget to go on a ghost tour or two. The Ghosts of Gettysburg tours are again offering special group rates and times for greyhound tours. There will be one tour location for Friday and one for Saturday instead of two for each night as in the past. Be sure to book your tickets in advance.

PROMOTE Sr. Greyhound Adoption in May!

The Seniors need your help too! Go see

gpaseniorsanctuary.org

racethewind.org

ahome4greys.org

and many GPA chapters always have some seniors available to adopt!

6

A Special Non-Profit Supporting Canine Cancer Studies

A wonderful mixed breed dog was diagnosed with bone cancer. A beloved greyhound had prostate cancer. An eight year old German Short Haired Pointed has rhino cancer. A seven year old happy greyhound boy started limping. Bone cancer at seven years of age? When considering treatments it seemed absurd that no progress had been made outside of amputation.

Several months later Morris Animal Foundation announced their push to find a cure for canine cancer in our pet's life time. For the founders of GREYlong, after having lost dogs to diseases with no cures or further treatment options, it was not even a stretch. We knew we had to make a difference.

GREYlong came together as a result of several pet owners who lost dogs from diseases with no cures or further treatment options. The organization's name is a nod to senior “graying” dogs and the hope that all pets will live long, healthy lives. In its fundraising mission, GREYlong partners with M&M Designs, a custom dog collar and apparel organization; M&M's signature canine clothing donates 100 percent of its profits to both GREYlong and animal adoption programs.

In 2007 we formed the nonprofit group GREYlong, with the goal “to make a difference in the lives of our companion pets today and tomorrow.” GREYlong uses money raised from events and the sale of various fun dog and human haut couture to sponsor canine cancer studies vetted by Morris Animal Foundation. These studies are focused on the prevention, treatment and cure of canine cancer. Year to date GREYlong has donated over \$28,000.

In 2011, GREYlong chose three studies to support and two of those studies are focused on bone cancer, evaluating the use of Cyclophosphamide as a therapy for bone cancer (Texas A&M) and examining drug targets for treating bone cancer (Cornell University). The third study, GREYlong continues its support of a Lymphoma study; Lymphoma is one of the most common and fatal cancers in dogs.

Visit with GREYlong at www.GREYlong.org and join us in finding a cure for canine cancer!

What You Need To Know About Pet Insurance Plans For Your Greyhound

From Pet Age Sept. 2010

When it comes to choosing insurance for your greyhound, people ask many of the same questions they would ask about their own insurance. What kind of coverage do I need? Will I be able to keep the same specialist or does it cover a specialist? Are prescription drugs covered? And so on.

A pet health insurance policy reimburses owners for covered veterinary care. These policies typically itemize covered treatments, deductibles and lifetime or per illness maximums. Costs vary based on the coverage and age and breed of the dog.

Pet injury coverage is a new option on the market that sometimes is part of an auto insurance policy that would cover treatment of a dog injured in a car accident up to a set limit. Check with your insurance agent to see if your policy includes coverage for a pet traveling in a car or if it is available.

Before you make a final plan choice consider the following:

- 1) Some policies may reimburse covered medical expenses for accidents, illnesses, surgeries, X-rays, prescriptions, hospitalizations, emergencies or cancer treatments, while others may only cover accident and illness after a waiting period.
- 2) If your dog has pre-existing conditions find out if they will be covered. Companies may enforce a waiting period for a curable condition or offer limited coverage for an incurable condition. Something like Diabetes or Cancer may be excluded entirely. If your dog is treated for a condition during the policy term that company may consider that a pre-existing condition when the policy is renewed!
- 3) Check out the exclusions. Not all pet insurance plans cover preventive care, dental care not associated with an accident or injury, behavioral treatment, breed specific hereditary conditions or elective procedures. Treatment of congenital conditions or hereditary conditions may have a limited benefit.

- 4) Find out if you're responsible for co-payments or deductibles and how the company makes payments. Some pay the vet directly and some will make the owner pay and then offer a reimbursement.
- 5) Is there a veterinarian network requirement? Make sure your vet is in the network or that may not be an issue.

Free Advertising!

Owners, Scott and Diane King of The Springfield/Route 66 KOA Campground in Springfield, MO use their marquee to reach many potential greyhound adopters.



Find supporters that can promote greyhound adoption for Free!



**Greyhound Pets of America
P.O. Box 3693
Springfield, MO 65808**

**ADDRESS CORRECTION
REQUESTED**