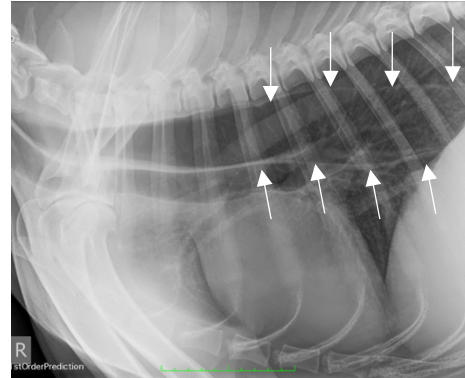


SEARCH FOR ANTIBODIES IN 'SERONEGATIVE' MYASTHENIA GRAVIS IN DOGS

Clinical study under the direction of An Vanhaesebrouck (Cambridge University)
- in collaboration with Oxford University, and several referral centres



Any breed can be affected by myasthenia gravis or megaesophagus. However, Golden Retrievers are overrepresented.



Chest X-ray showing air-filled, dilated esophagus, called megaesophagus.

Myasthenia gravis is a condition characterised by muscle weakness, often associated with megaesophagus. Radioimmunoassay (RIA) is the gold standard for the diagnosis of myasthenia gravis. However, some dogs have no detectable antibodies on the current RIA, although myasthenia gravis is highly suspected. Some of these dogs may have antibodies with low affinity against AChRs or other neuromuscular junction proteins. Cell-based assays are being developed to screen for these antibodies.

We are looking for owners and veterinarians who are willing to contribute to this study. Contribution to this study would involve the donation of a leftover^a blood sample (serum) from a dog suspected of 'seronegative' myasthenia gravis.

We would like to ask our veterinary colleagues to contact us if they see a dog suspected of having myasthenia gravis which tested negative by RIA. If you are the owner of a dog suspected of myasthenia gravis which tested negative by RIA and if your dog was diagnosed by a specialist (or a specialist in training), please bring this project to the attention of your veterinarian. Initially, we focus on testing samples from highly suspicious cases, but the test could eventually be accessible to a wider group of affected dogs.

This project is funded by Petsavers and Petplan Charitable Trust. As the project is a clinical research study, the results of the cell-based assay will not be immediately available to pet owners or vets. However, contribution to this study is expected to enhance the diagnosis, treatment, and outcome of dogs with myasthenia gravis and megaesophagus in the future.

Any questions, please contact: myasthenia@vet.cam.ac.uk.

^a A left-over sample is the surplus of a sample that has been obtained and used for clinical purposes (e.g., for routine blood testing, RIA test, ...), and would otherwise be discarded.