

# Newsletter for Referring Vets

## Internal Medicine Service

FIP and pituitary dwarfism treatment success

## Clinical support

Free online resources for referring vets

## Latest news

Research updates and staff successes

## Clinical Club

2025 CPD dates announced for vets and nurses



Welcome



Dear colleagues,

Welcome to the winter newsletter from the Hospital for Small Animals at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies.

We have several interesting case studies in this newsletter: the Feline Internal Medicine Service, when not celebrating the Hospital's Gold Cat Friendly Clinic status, have been refining their treatments for FIP, which is now a much more treatable disease. They also offer online resources for managing mycobacterial infections.

The Internal Medicine Service report on a case of pituitary dwarfism, and, on the pituitary theme, the Neurology Service recently successfully performed a transsphenoidal hypophysectomy in a dog. We are pleased to add this to the Hospital's treatment options for Cushing's disease.

We also welcome many new faces to the Hospital's senior veterinary teams: Diplomate Anna Knebel DipECVN and recent resident Ivona Orgonikova have joined the Neurology Service, and Diplomate Cristina Bianchi DipECVAA joined the Anaesthesia Service. Congratulations also go to the Hospital's newly qualified Diplomates Suzanne Busser DipECVIM-CA (Onc) and Simone Cutler DipECVECC.

The Specialist-led Rabbit and Exotics Service recently welcomed Dr Gianluca Deli as the team's fourth senior veterinary surgeon, and also celebrated a Chicken Night event with many clients, old and new. Read more about the Service on page 6.

We're continuing with our job share for now: Sue has had a lot of adventures since going part-time and Laura has continued working in oncology clinics alongside managerial roles. We both want to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support of the Hospital and wish you all a happy and successful 2025, and a stress-free holiday period!

*Sue* *Laura*

Sue Murphy and Laura Blackwood, Co-directors of Clinical Services

## Survey

### Share your thoughts and you could win!

We would love to hear your views on our referring vet newsletter.

We know that veterinary professionals are incredibly busy, so we would like to make sure that we send you relevant information, at the right time and in the format you find most convenient.

Can you spare five minutes to complete a quick online survey and share your thoughts with us?

As an incentive, we will enter everyone who completes the survey before the end of February 2025 into a prize draw for a £50 Love2shop voucher – an opportunity to treat yourself and your colleagues!



Complete our short survey and be in with a chance of winning a £50 shopping voucher: scan this QR code or visit <https://forms.gle/KxqvDsb5CaLv8QVt8>



## Refer a case



0131 650 7651



[hfsareception@ed.ac.uk](mailto:hfsareception@ed.ac.uk)



[edin.ac/hfsa-referral-form](https://edin.ac/hfsa-referral-form)



The Dick Vet is on LinkedIn, where we post information on upcoming CPD events and postgraduate courses, highlight our clinical research, feature news on our staff and student and much more. If you'd like to follow us then please search for us, or go to [www.linkedin.com/company/TheDickVet](https://www.linkedin.com/company/TheDickVet).



## New treatment turns the tables on Feline Infectious Peritonitis

Clinicians in the Internal Medicine Service have successfully treated over 50 cats with Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) since March 2021, and have advised vets dealing with hundreds more cases, thanks to the availability of new anti-viral drugs.

The Specialist-led team report a success rate of over 85 per cent following treatment with a 12-week protocol of GS-441524, the main plasma metabolite of Remdesivir, and occasionally with other antivirals.

This has drastically improved prognosis of FIP, a condition previously considered fatal in almost all cases.



Archie made a full recovery after oral treatment with GS-441524

### Successful recovery

Archie\*, a six-month-old Maine Coon, was referred after losing 25 per cent of his body weight in 10 days. He was lethargic and anorexic, with marked abdominal lymphadenopathy.

On arrival, Archie was recumbent, anaemic, had severe diarrhoea and significant muscle atrophy. He was hypoalbuminaemic (23g/L) and markedly hyperglobulinaemic (81g/L) making his albumin:globulin ratio less than 0.3, which was highly suggestive of FIP.

His serum alpha1-glycoprotein (AGP) concentration was three times the reference interval (1445ug/ml, normal <500ug/ml) which further supported FIP as a differential.

A fine needle aspirate of the abdominal lymph nodes found pyogranulomatous inflammation, which was further consistent with FIP. Immunohistochemistry for feline coronavirus (FCoV) was positive, which confirmed the diagnosis.

Supportive treatment including intravenous (IV) fluids, pain medication and medical appetite stimulation was started, followed by a 12-week oral treatment course of the antiviral GS-441524.

Archie was discharged after three days of treatment, without diarrhoea and eating well.

His condition was monitored over the next three months, including assessment of the main inflammatory marker (AGP), which decreased with successful treatment. Six months later, he has made a full recovery with no signs of residual disease.

### Challenging disease

FCoV remains a ubiquitous virus in the cat population. It is estimated that 40-50 per cent of cats are carriers and up to 80-100 per cent in a multi-cat household.

While predicting when enteric FCoV infection develops into the clinical picture of FIP in individual cases remains challenging, treating FIP used to be nearly impossible, with the infection leading to fatal outcomes in the vast majority before the availability of GS-441524.

The Hospital is one of the leading centres for FIP in the UK and is undertaking key research to improve treatment options.

### Supporting veterinarians

The Hospital hold stocks of GS-441524/ Remdesivir in tablet, liquid and injectable form and can advise on the use of these and other anti-viral medications for FIP.

*\*Patient's name has been changed.*

“We are now looking to expand our research further and develop a patient-centred treatment programme that may lower the current treatment duration of 12 weeks in the future, reducing the risk of developing drug resistance and making treatment both easier and more affordable for clients.”

Conor O'Halloran, Internal Medicine Resident



### Advice & Referrals

If you are a referring veterinarian requiring advice on a suspected FIP case, or would like to arrange a referral of a cat with suspected or confirmed FIP, please contact us at [hfsareception@ed.ac.uk](mailto:hfsareception@ed.ac.uk)

## Free online resources for companion animal mycobacterial disease

Clinicians from the Hospital for Small Animals have developed free resources for referring vets to use in diagnosing and treating mycobacteria cases in companion animals. This online resource, the first in the world of its type, complements the Hospital's existing mycobacteria clinical advice service.

### Expert knowledge

We are very proud that our Hospital offers the only dedicated clinical advice service for companion animal mycobacterial diseases in the world. The service allows vets to access specific guidance and advice on both tuberculosis and non-tuberculous infections in cats and dogs and other companion animals.

The service, which launched in 2018, is led by Professor of Feline Medicine, Daniëlle Gunn-Moore and Dr Conor O'Halloran, who collectively have over 40 years of clinical experience and research activity in this field.

The clinical advice service has been incredibly successful since its launch and currently helps several hundred animals a year.



A cat with a facial lesion at the medial canthus of the left eye caused by *Mycobacterium bovis* infection.

The wealth of experience and case numbers this service generates has also allowed us to dramatically improve clinical outcomes, with survival rates of around 80% now possible.

### Free resources

To allow clinicians rapid access to the information they may need, we have created a dedicated online resource that contains essential information on the background of mycobacterial infections, the clinical signs, diagnostic options, treatment guidelines, prognostic data and much more.

The resource has been developed to allow clinicians to access everything they need to confidently manage mycobacterial cases in their own practice.

Our veterinary experts are still able to offer advice to veterinary surgeons on challenging or complex cases, but this advice now incurs a small fee to allow us to fund continued research and clinical improvements in this field. A referral advice form can be downloaded from the mycobacterial resource webpage.



### Mycobacterial Resources

To access please visit  
<https://edin.ac/3NW19XN>



### Contact us

If there are any questions concerning mycobacterial diseases in companion animals that are not covered by this material:  
[companion.animalTB@ed.ac.uk](mailto:companion.animalTB@ed.ac.uk)

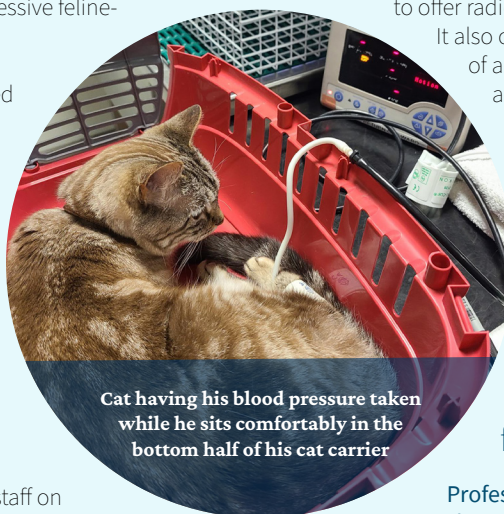
## Gold status recognises quality feline services

The Hospital is proud that it has held Gold Cat Friendly Clinic status from I CatCare for over 10 years due to its impressive feline-friendly staff and facilities.

The gold accreditation, which was first awarded in 2013, recognises the Hospital's ongoing commitment to offer the highest level of care to its feline patients.

In addition to its team of Specialist-led feline vets working in the referral Feline Service and state-of-the-art facilities, the Hospital has a feline-dedicated ward, feline-only treatment room and waiting area and multiple feline welfare-friendly working practices, to minimise patient stress and ensure the optimal recovery of cats in its care.

The Hospital also offers regular training to all staff on cat behaviour and welfare, so that they are aware of the specific needs of feline patients.



Cat having his blood pressure taken while he sits comfortably in the bottom half of his cat carrier

The Hospital is one of a small number of centres in UK that is able to offer radioactive iodine treatment for hyperthyroidism.

It also offers some of the shortest hospitalisation times of any centre, allowing cats to return home as soon as it is safe to do so.

“Having Gold Cat Friendly Clinic status shows the dedication of the whole team to providing the best possible care for cats at the Hospital. We look to build on to keep improving and providing even better care for our feline patients.”

**Professor Danielle Gunn-Moore, RCVS Specialist in Feline Medicine**

## Successful treatment of hyposomatotropism

A young dog with pituitary dwarfism has responded well to progesterone treatment from veterinary Specialists in the Internal Medicine Service.

### Undersized dog

Pixie the Chihuahua was referred by her vet to the Hospital owing to her failure to grow, mental dullness and lethargy. She had experienced multiple hypoglycaemic episodes and was being fed every three hours in an attempt to maintain her glucose levels. At six months old, she weighed less than half a kilogramme, had delayed closing of growth plates and dental eruption, a dull coat and was very thin, with a body condition score of two out of five.



Pixie weighed less than 500g at six months old



Pixie (front) with her brother now has a normal body condition and weight

Blood tests, including routine serum biochemistry, haematology, fructosamine, bile acid stimulation test and total and free T4, as well as imaging, excluded many potential causes for the presenting problems, including a portosystemic shunt and congenital hypothyroidism. Further testing revealed that the young dog had a severe deficit in insulin-like growth factor (IGF) 1, explaining the dog's stunted growth and development as well as hypoglycaemic collapse episodes.

### Unusual diagnosis

Hyposomatotropism is an extremely rare condition characterised by

the underdevelopment of the pituitary gland, resulting in a deficiency of growth hormone and, in some cases, other key hormones. The Dick Vet team prescribed regular progesterone injections to stimulate the production of growth hormone from the dog's mammary glands, which is important for glucose homeostasis and also signals the production of IGF-1 in the liver.

### Positive outcome

Within nine months, Pixie had nearly tripled in weight, was no longer hypoglycaemic and had normal energy levels for a dog her age. Her adult teeth had erupted, her coat was much improved and her body condition score was normal. Pixie will require progesterone injections for the rest of her life and will be small for her breed, however vets are confident that she will continue to have a great quality of life.

“Pixie is a wonderful patient; watching her grow and thrive has been a real pleasure. It is so rewarding to see the positive difference we can make for our patients and their owners.”

- Dr Alasdair Boag, RCVS Specialist in Small Animal Medicine.



Further info on the Internal Medicine Service

Please visit <https://edin.ac/48KvCBS>



## Online tool helps detect infections

Specialists from the Soft Tissue Surgery Service have developed a free online resource to help veterinary professionals improve post-surgery patient care.

The Refined Edinburgh Surgical Infection Surveillance & Tracking Questionnaire (RESIST-Q) is designed to enhance the monitoring and management of surgical site infections (SSIs) in veterinary practices.

By employing a caregiver-based questionnaire, RESIST-Q offers a streamlined, efficient method for detecting surgical site infections that might otherwise go unreported.



The survey integrates active surveillance methods to provide an accurate, proactive approach to SSI detection and prevention, and has been developed over three years, refined by Surgical Resident Owen Glenn and Surgery Nurse Ebba Orjefelt.

“By using RESIST-Q, our clinicians have been able to detect surgery site infections promptly and with more accuracy than before, allowing for timely interventions and improved infection control. We hope that by sharing this tool with our referring vets, they and their patients can benefit.”

- Professor Kelly Blacklock, RCVS Specialist in Soft Tissue Surgery and RESIST-Q developer



Enquiries

Find out more: <https://edin.ac/40aplge>





## Rabbit and Exotic Animal Service expanded

The Hospital for Small Animals has expanded its exotic animal veterinary services to meet its growing caseload.

The Dick Vet Rabbit and Exotic Animal Practice recently welcomed Dr Gianluca Deli as the team's fourth senior veterinary surgeon and Aicha Aboudinar as their second dedicated exotic animal veterinary nurse.



These latest appointments mean that the DVREP has grown to a team of 10 dedicated staff. Gianluca and Aicha will join Head of Service and ECZM and RCVS Specialist Dr Jenna Richardson, as well as two senior clinicians, two residents, two interns, and another dedicated exotic animal veterinary nurse.

The Dick Vet Rabbit and Exotic Practice is the largest exotic animal practice in Scotland and provides a well-established referral service, offering care to rabbits and exotic pet species across Scotland and the north of England.

“It really is an exciting time for our practice as we welcome new staff to our team. Due to an increased caseload, our expanded team allows us to continue to offer a high-quality referral service, as well as case support and advice. We very much value the relationship we have with our referring veterinary practices and are grateful for the opportunity to work with them on our collective patients.”

Dr Jenna Richardson, Head of the Dick Vet Rabbit and Exotic Practice

### Multidisciplinary support

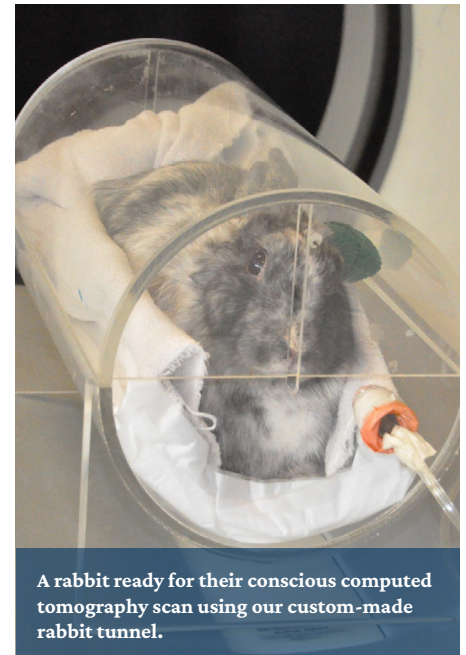
As part of the Hospital for Small Animals, the Rabbit and Exotic Practice has immediate access to multi-disciplinary support, including advanced imaging and state-of-the-art facilities under one roof.

Where a patient might require additional specialist treatments, the team works collaboratively with the Hospital's other 14 specialist referral services, and can offer advanced treatment options including cataract phacoemulsification, palliative or curative radiation therapy, thoracic surgery and complex fracture fixations. The service also offers 24-hour care facilities, open to all species.

### Exotic expertise

Rabbits are the third-most popular pet in the UK, and are the most common species treated at DVREP. With specific expertise in rabbit medicine, the team is leading developments in medicine and surgery.

The team has fine-tuned a protocol facilitating computed tomography (CT) scans to be performed in conscious rabbits.



Avoiding sedation is safer for the patient and allows them to be back in their designated ward enclosure within five minutes of the scan ending, reducing stress.



### Further info about the practice and its services

Please visit <https://edin.ac/3CduBG9>



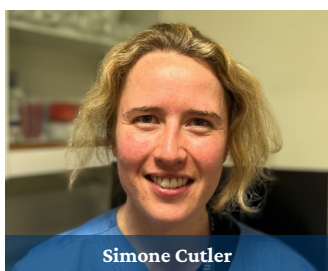


## Exam Success

Congratulations to two of our clinicians who are celebrating their recent exam success.

- Simone Cutler has become a European Diplomat in Emergency and Critical Care (DipECVECC).
- Suzanne Busser has become a European Diplomat in Small Animal Oncology (DipECVIM-CA (Onc))

Both completed more than three years of training, exams and research to achieve the highest qualification in their particular veterinary field. The Hospital for Small Animals has over 40 European and American Diplomates working across its 14 referral services, and we are delighted to welcome two more to the team.



Simone Cutler



Suzanne Busser

## MBE Accolade

Congratulations to Dr Jasmin Paris from our Internal Medicine Service, who has been made an MBE.

Jasmin, a European Diplomat in Small Animal Internal Medicine and record breaking ultrarunner, became the first woman to complete the gruelling 100-mile Barkley Marathons trail race in the competition's history earlier this year. Her MBE was awarded for services to fell and long-distance running.



Jasmin Paris

## Trial offers dogs cancer treatment hope

Clinicians from the Hospital are investigating the effectiveness of treatment derived from berries on canine oral melanoma.

Currently, there are limited treatment options for the disease – the most common cause of canine oral tumours – and dogs typically die less than one year after being diagnosed.

### Berry-based therapy

The new trial will investigate the effectiveness of a drug called tiglianol tigliate – derived from the berries of the blushwood tree, found only in parts of Queensland, Australia – against the disease.

The drug disrupts blood vessels inside tumours without damaging surrounding healthy tissues.

If it proves effective against canine oral melanoma, the drug – currently licensed to treat a different form of canine cancer – could spare dogs the need to undergo invasive surgery.

The pilot trial will involve eight dogs, with the team planning to increase the number of participants if the initial results are promising.

### Human benefits

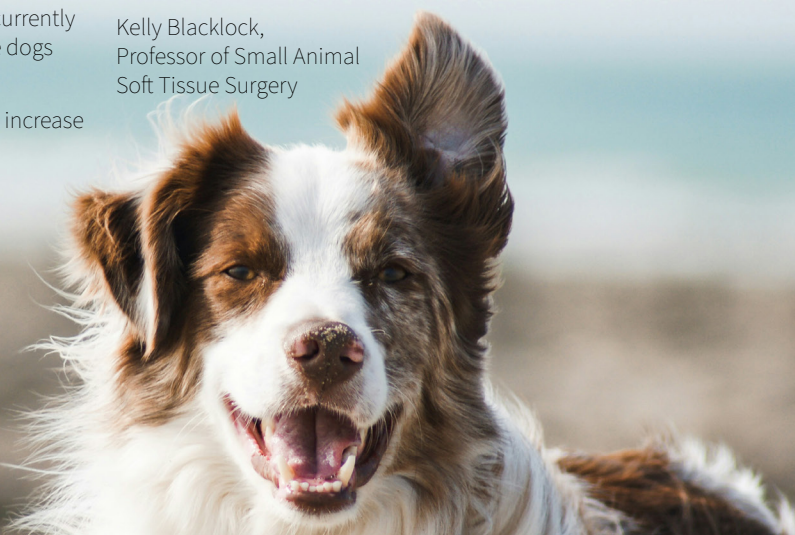
The trial could also provide valuable insights into cancer in humans as canine oral melanoma shares many common features with human mucosal melanoma.

The trial is being funded by QBiotics, the manufacturers of tiglianol tigliate.

*“By harnessing the power of a naturally derived compound, we aim to offer new hope to dogs suffering from this aggressive disease, and potentially gain insights that could benefit human medicine as well.”*

*“If successful, this treatment could transform the way we approach cancer therapy in veterinary medicine, sparing many dogs from the need for surgery.”*

Kelly Blacklock,  
Professor of Small Animal  
Soft Tissue Surgery





## 2025 Clinical Club Dates

The Dick Vet Clinical Club and Nurses Clinical Club hold monthly online CPD webinars. These free events are hosted by experts who discuss recent advances in their clinical area to help vets and vet nurses develop or refresh their knowledge.

### Dick Vet Clinical Club CPD

- JAN

15

**Professor Tim Nuttall**  
 Head of Dermatology Service  
 So many choices! Making sense of treatment options for canine atopic dermatitis

FEB

05

**Dr Sabina Diez Bernal**  
 Senior Lecturer in Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia  
 Small changes, big impact: enhancing sustainability in small animal anaesthesia

MAR

05

**Professor Dylan Clements**  
 Professor of Small Animal Orthopaedics  
 Trauma management

APR

02

**Dr Liam Wilson**  
 Lecturer in Veterinary Anatomic Pathology  
 Advanced diagnostic methods - what are they and what can they do for us?

MAY

07

**Dr Juan Carlos Serra**  
 Senior Lecturer in Small Animal Oncology  
 Tumours of the respiratory system: review of the diagnostic and therapeutic approach

JUN

04

**Dr Jenna Richardson**  
 Head of Dick Vet Rabbit and Exotic Animal Practice  
 Dental disease in rabbits: a practical approach

JUL

02

**Professor Tobias Schwarz**  
 Head of Diagnostic Imaging Service  
 Radiography & CT for the emergency canine and feline Patient

AUG

06

**Professor Danielle Gunn Moore & Rachael Hammond**  
 Head of Feline Service & Teaching Technician Supervisor  
 Utilisation of acute phase proteins in feline disease and the therapeutic drug monitoring of FIP antivirals

SEP

03

**Dr Magdalena Parys**  
 Senior Lecturer in Oncology  
 Radiotherapy for head and neck cancer in veterinary oncology

OCT

01

**Dr Kevin McPeake**  
 Head of Behaviour Service  
 Behavioural first aid in general practice

NOV

05

**Dr Victoria Robinson**  
 Senior Lecturer in Veterinary Dermatology  
 Alopecia – help, my pet is losing their hair! A practical guide to work-up

DEC

03

**Dr Lauren Lacordia**  
 Senior Lecturer in Small Animal Internal Medicine  
 The changing face of small animal diabetes management

### Dick Vet Nurses Clinical Club CPD

- JAN

29

**Laura Edwards**  
 Veterinary Nurse and Lecturer  
 Aligning animal and human health - the role of the veterinary nurse

FEB

26

**Lindsay Ashburner**  
 Emergency and Critical Care Nurse  
 Nursing the acute haemorrhagic diarrhoea syndrome patient

MAR

26

**Emma Thomson**  
 Emergency and Critical Care Nurse  
 Beyond the 9 to 5: key considerations for thriving OOH's

APR

30

**Abbie Roberts**  
 Internal Medicine Nurse  
 Breath of fresh air - mastering respiratory endoscopy for nurses

MAY

28

**Fiona Wilson**  
 Emergency and Critical Care Nurse  
 Hyperthermia and pyrexia - understanding the difference

JUN

25

**Ebba Orjefelt**  
 Soft Tissue Surgery Nurse  
 In the blink of a SSI

JUL

30

**Hayley Gowan**  
 Internal Medicine Nurse  
 Cushing's disease in dogs

AUG

27

**Lyndsay Kennedy**  
 Ophthalmology Nurse  
 Wee eyes, wee problems? - Ophthalmic care for small furries

SEP

24

**Lisa Telford**  
 Soft Tissue Surgery Nurse  
 Feeling the pressure? - Negative pressure wound therapy in practice

OCT

29

**Fiona McDowall**  
 Teaching Fellow (Student Support and Clinical Skills)  
 Pet loss support

NOV

26

**Jess Davies & Olivia Noble**  
 Anaesthesia Nurse and Surgical Nurse  
 Sustainability in anaesthesia: breathing new life or just a load of hot air?

DEC

17

**Jennifer Marshall**  
 Anaesthesia Nurse and Teaching Fellow  
 Considerations for anaesthetising the brachycephalic dog



For full details of all the events and booking information, visit  
<https://edin.ac/vet-cpd>

