



## COVID-19 - An update for WSAVA Members

### March 30th, 2021

During the last month, a number of great questions have been raised concerning the role SARS-CoV-2 plays in the health of companion animals and their owners, with discussions about the role of new variants being the most prominent.

**Our One Health and Scientific Advisory Committees still recommend following worldwide case reports** on the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) website for the most accurate information of new confirmed cases.

#### Tracking and Reports by the OIE

There are also country-specific websites, such as the website of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), that track information about new confirmed cases.

#### Tracking website by the USDA

As discussed in our February update, the emergence of new strains of SARS-CoV-2 that may be more easily transmittable or associated with disease manifestations other than respiratory and gastrointestinal, have been recognized around the world. Variants from the United Kingdom (B.1.1.7), South Africa (B.1.351), and Brazil (P.1) have been monitored the most closely to date. [Recently, a discussion of variants in the United States was published.](#)

#### Article in the Guardian about the UK variant

Concerns about the effect of the UK variant B.1.1.7 on pets was in the news again last week, with a potential association with myocarditis in small companion animals.

#### Manuscript

These reports started after the pre-print of a manuscript currently in peer-review was released.

A veterinary specialty hospital in the United Kingdom is reporting findings of acute myocarditis in 8 cats and 3 dogs diagnosed between January 22 and February 10, 2021. In 6 animals, SARS-CoV-2 RNA of the B 1.1.7 variant was amplified from rectal swabs at low copy numbers (2 cats; 1 dog) or antibodies developed over time (2 cats, 1 dog). The myocarditis resolved in all cases with treatment, but 1 cat was ultimately euthanized after recurrence of clinical signs and uncontrolled ventricular tachycardia.

None of the pets had respiratory signs of disease and most were owned by families with COVID-19 symptoms, with or without confirmed infection. There are some potential limitations to the study and we recommend that members re-evaluate the findings once peer-review has been completed. However, the methods employed in the study are valid and the findings may represent a new manifestation of SARS-CoV-2 infection that could prove to relate to this specific variant after continued study. At this time, it seems prudent for veterinarians to consider SARS-CoV-2 infection as a potential differential diagnosis for dogs or cats with clinical evidence of myocarditis, especially if the animal comes from a family with characteristic signs of COVID-19 or confirmed infection with SARS-CoV-2.

The B.1.1.7 variant has been recognized in people and companion animals of countries other than the United Kingdom, including the United States.

#### **News article on UK variant in the US**

The Internal Medicine and Cardiology Services at Colorado State University were surveyed during the week of March 22 and myocarditis suspected to be from SARS-CoV-2 infection has not been suspected in cases seen at this Veterinary Teaching Hospital. In addition, neither the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine list serves for Internal Medicine nor Cardiology have suggested this potential syndrome has been recognized as yet in this country.

These types of lists serves and our global WSAVA membership are excellent ways to potentially detect new manifestations of diseases of all types. Please do not hesitate to contact the WSAVA One Health Committee and Scientific Committees if you are recognizing clinical syndromes that you consider to be unique.

Another important outcome from this pre-print study is to remind veterinarians from around the world that the pandemic continues and we should continue to be diligent, not just in the recognition of SARS-CoV-2-associated illness in pets but also in strategies to potentially lessen transmission between people and their pets. We recommend that veterinarians continue to counsel their owners that this virus and its variants are reverse zoonoses with infection of pets initiated by contact with an infected person. This means that we need to continue to socially distance from our pets if we are showing signs of COVID-19, as we would with our 2-legged family members.

Please continue to refer your clients to information site, such as those maintained by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention for current recommendations as to how to avoid this infection in your pets.

#### **CDC's recommendations**

We hope you find this update useful and will be adding translations to the Resource Hub in the coming days.

Please let us know if you have questions or comments. Stay safe!

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Visit the WSAVA COVID-19 resource hub here

World Small Animal Veterinary Association

[www.wsava.org](http://www.wsava.org)

**Vision Statement:** All companion animals worldwide receive veterinary care that ensures their optimal health and welfare

**Mission Statement:** To advance the health and welfare of companion animals worldwide through an educated, committed and collaborative global community of veterinary peers



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