

World Small Animal Veterinary Association

WSAVA Hereditary Disease Committee (WSAVA-HDC)

Terms of Reference

June 2017

Context

Many hereditary diseases and genetic predispositions to disease are seen in every day's clinical small animal practice. Today, approximately 900 and 250 hereditary diseases and genetic predispositions are recognized in dogs and cats, respectively, and some are common, while others are rare. Many hereditary diseases are well characterized from clinical signs to the gene defect and precise diagnostic tools have been developed to detect not only affecteds, but also carriers. Moreover, specific treatments can be offered to affecteds and genetic counseling can readily improve the health of small animals in future generations. The small animal clinician should play an important role in diagnosing, managing, and preventing these heritable disease traits. However, the small animal clinician's role has been hampered because of the huge diversity of diseases, unawareness of specific diagnostic tools, lack of knowledge of clinical genetics and hesitations on counseling owners and breeders regarding hereditary traits to improve the health of their patients and future generations.

Vision of WSAVA Hereditary Disease Committee

Clinicians worldwide empowered to recognize, diagnose, and manage hereditary diseases and genetic predisposition in their small animal patients and work toward reducing the occurrence of these deleterious traits in future generations through informed breeding which will assure animal welfare and preserve desirable breed characteristics.

Mission of WSAVA Hereditary Disease Committee

To raise awareness and understanding of hereditary diseases and genetic predispositions to disease in small animals by providing educational opportunities, sound resources, and guidelines. The WSAVA Hereditary Disease Committee strives to enhance the level of the small animal clinician's confidence and competence in recognizing and managing hereditary diseases in small animals and thereby improve the health of their patients now and in future generations.

Goals of WSAVA Hereditary Disease Committee

WSAVA Hereditary Disease Committee is facilitating worldwide educational opportunities, comprehensive resource, and practical guidelines on the diagnosis, management and control of hereditary diseases in small animals with the following specific goals:

- Create a web-based database on hereditary diseases and genetic predispositions which includes breeds, available genetic tests, and available laboratories.

- Focus on generating relevant information on clinical features and course of disease, quality diagnostic tests, effective and safe therapy and ethical genetic control relevant to the small animal clinician.
- Develop practical guidelines on accurate diagnosis of hereditary traits and their management in diseased small animals but also control these traits in future generations for small animal clinicians.
- Provide and facilitate continuing education on practical and novel clinical genetic aspects at the WSAVA conferences but also other international and national conferences to improve the understand and clinical approach to hereditary disease traits in small animals and taking into account regional differences in attitude, education and available diagnostic and management modalities.
- Raise awareness of reciprocal benefits of studies in human and small animals as one health medicine.

WSAVA Hereditary Disease Committee Membership

The core committee will be comprised of individuals with expertise in the area of hereditary diseases and clinical genetics. Ideally, it is composed of clinical veterinarians representing the basic science and clinical aspects as well as the different regions reflected in the WSAVA membership, as well as the different species encompassed by the association's "small animal" designation. The membership of the WSAVA-HDC will be comprised largely of individuals with a predominant clinical background. Membership numbers are to be determined by the committee based on need and budgeting realities. The committee shall not be less than 4 members at any time. Consultants and clinical as well as scientific advisors can be added.

The WSAVA Executive Board (EB) will appoint one of its members to be a liaison with the WSAVA-HDC. The committee chair will be one of the WSAVA-HDC members and elected by the WSAVA-HDC committee.

Nominations for membership must be approved by the WSAVA EB and recommendations are voted on by the Assembly. Member terms will be for 4 years with the ability to be re-appointed twice, or at the discretion of the committee and the WSAVA EB.

Obligations of the WSAVA Hereditary Disease Committee

- a. To develop a web-based Database on Hereditary Diseases, DNA tests, and Genetic laboratories for screening small animals.
- b. To develop Guidelines on Hereditary Disease and Genetic Predisposition to Disease in dogs and cats for the small animal practitioners
- c. To work towards broad dissemination and acceptance of the guidelines on hereditary diseases throughout the world.
- d. To develop continuing education lectures, workshops and discussion programs that are targeted and relevant to a range of small animal clinicians in the audiences with a speaker bank of individuals with expertise in the field of clinical genetics who ascribe to the principles set out in the guidelines and associated tools.
- e. To promote valid clinical tools of relevance and utility for veterinary practitioners in clinical practice throughout the world.

- f. To work towards broad translation of both the guidelines and associated protocols.
- g. To assist with the development and/or implementation of WSAVA position statements and/or lobbying efforts with respect to proper assessment and management of hereditary diseases and genetic predispositions globally.
- h. To act as an advisory body to the WSAVA Executive Board where issues of genetic assessment and management arise.
- i. To contemplate and/or forward to the WSAVA leadership other ways of accomplishing the WSAVA HDC vision and mission statement
- j. To consider liaising with other WSAVA committees and/or standardization projects where issues related to the assessment and management hereditary disease and genetic predispositions are of mutual interest.
- k. To ensure GPC members fulfill the duties listed above. Should a member fail in their responsibilities, the WSAVA HDC chair and its members will work in concert with the WSAVA EB to rectify, including the possibility of member replacement.

Other rights and obligations of the WSAVA Hereditary Disease Committee

An annual report will be provided to the WSAVA Assembly and reports on the activities and recommendations or suggestions of the WSAVA HDC will be provided to the WSAVA EB by way of minutes and additional written and oral reports as appropriate, and then as determined to the General Assembly. The committee will provide an annual budget for consideration by the WSAVA Treasurer during the compilation of the WSAVA annual budget, and will assist the WSAVA Secretariat with identifying potential GPC sponsors.

Arrangements for meetings

- a. The WSAVA HDC shall meet as needed by Teleconference, at least twice a year.
- b. The WSAVA HDC will meet in person, ideally at the WSAVA annual World Congress but other venues that better reflect the needs of the GPC will also be considered, if WSAVA funding permits and such a meeting is deemed desirable,
- c. Minutes of the WSAVA HDC meeting shall be recorded and agreed upon by the WSAVA HDC prior to presentation to the WSAVA EB.
- d. Minutes of the final decisions reached after presentation to the EB shall be presented as a written report to the General Assembly annually.
- e. A majority of WSAVA HDC members present during a teleconference or face-to-face meeting shall constitute a committee quorum.