

## **GDV (aka bloat) in UK Deerhounds – Preliminary Survey Results**

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### What and Why?

GDV (gastric dilatation volvulus AKA gastric torsion) has been previously reported as causing 2.5% of canine mortalities in the UK, but when examined by breed, GDV accounts for 7% of Deerhound deaths. The objective of our study was to identify potential patterns/differences reported by owners regarding GDV events, familial relationships, exercise practices, feeding practices, and any other husbandry practices between those Deerhounds affected and those unaffected by GDV.

### How?

Paper based and online questionnaires consisting of 64 questions covering a broad range of animal particulars and husbandry practices were disseminated via the Deerhound Club UK to owners and breeders throughout the UK. So far 145 responses have been analysed, with 37 dogs affected by GDV. All neuter status and gender combinations were represented, with an age range from 0.5 to 13.5 years.

### Results

Question responses were themed and categorized to permit statistical analysis. Of GDV affected animals (37 animals, with 2 dogs suffering repeat episodes, ages at onset ranged from 11 months to 11 years. 20 dogs survived, 8 were unfortunately euthanased on admission to a vet, 1 died pre-operatively, 3 died post-operatively, and outcomes for 3 dogs were not reported. Feeding prior to GDV onset ranged broadly from 1-12 hours, and 11 owners reported inclement weather at the time of event, 10 reported mild or expected weather conditions, the remainder (16) did not have weather conditions reported. No significant differences ( $p>0.05$ ) were observed between affected (GDV) and unaffected (healthy) animal populations when we compared their reported temperament, body condition score and feeding practices (including speed of food consumption, number of animals in contact at feeding, frequency and size of feeds, reported air gulping, reported borborygmi (gurgling guts) and reported eructation (burping)) were examined.

However, of affected individuals, 11 owners reported a preceding “triggering event” and an additional 5 owners reported an event which could be considered a stressor. This event was most commonly a prolonged car journey but also included other events such as changes of environment, firework events etc.

### Summary

The relationship between stress and GDV events suggested by our results is corroborated by previous research and indicates that further investigation is warranted to identify risk factors (particularly perceived stress) affecting GDV incidence and associated mortalities in UK Deerhounds. With additional responses incoming, our analytical work is on-going and further updates are planned. However, at this stage increased vigilance around times that would be considered stressful for the development of a GDV would appear sensible.