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Skin Cancer in the Standard Poodle

The Ostrander Laboratory at the National Human Genome Research Institute at NIH is conducting research on the genetic susceptibility to squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) of the digit in the Standard Poodle. This is a disease with genetic underpinnings and our ultimate goal is to identify the genetic variants responsible for susceptibility to this disease. Digital SCC is seen more often in dogs with black coats. Black Standard Poodles are as much as 12 times more likely than the general dog population to suffer from digital SCC¹. In addition, this cancer also affects black dogs of several other breeds, such as the Giant Schnauzer, Scottish Terrier and Labrador Retriever.

For genetics studies such as this one, we require DNA from large numbers of individuals in order to obtain statistically valid results. The Ostrander Lab is soliciting blood samples from any Standard Poodle with squamous cell carcinoma of the digit. In addition, we seek samples from Standard Poodles over the age of five, with no known cancer to genotype as normal controls. Researchers at the Ostrander Lab will then look at all the dog's chromosomes to try and identify regions of the genome that affected dogs share which unaffected dogs lack.

Ostrander Lab members will be attending the Poodle Club of America National Specialty in Salisbury, MD June 12 and 13 to recruit participants for this research. Please stop by our table at the show to donate a blood sample from your poodle or to get more information about our research. All genetic and contact information collected for each dog will remain confidential. Specifically, your participation in the study, your dog's pedigree, health information you provide, and any data we get from your dog's DNA sample will not be disclosed to any breeders, Club personnel, the AKC, or the AKC Canine Health Foundation.

The sample you provide will be instrumental in helping to identify the genomic mutations associated with digital SCC. Every sample is precious and provides researchers with new and unique genetic information. Finding the genome location is the first step in what we hope will ultimately lead to a genetic test for digital SCC. If this research is successful, breeders could utilize the test to make informed decisions and reduce the frequency of the disease in the population. A diagnosis of digital SCC often results in the eventual amputation of the affected toe. Determining the genetic cause of the disease is a necessary first for developing preventative therapies for dogs at risk.

If you are interested in participating, know someone who is interested, or have questions please contact Dana Mosher, Ostrander Lab Samples Manager, at mosherd@mail.nih.gov or

(301) 451-9390. For information about the Canine Genome Project in the Ostrander lab and for links to recent publications, please visit our website at http://research.nhgri.nih.gov/dog_genome/.

Thank you so much for supporting canine health research! Our work would not be possible without the participation of responsive owners and club members like you.

Sincerely,

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1. Fawver, B., "Poodles Considered at Increased Risk for Two Types of Cancer". Purina Pro Club Poodle Update, Jan. 2006