



The
Otterhound Club
of America

Confidential survey of Otterhound health and mortality

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2015 Mortality report



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Introduction

In 2009 a very successful international survey of Otterhound health and disease was undertaken in collaboration with the Otterhound Club and the Otterhound Club of America. In an attempt to follow the Otterhounds who took part in the survey forward through their lives, and also to try to pick up new participants who did not take part in the 2009 survey, perhaps because they had not yet been born, an ongoing survey of Otterhound health and mortality was launched in February 2011.

Results of the survey were collated and a two-part report produced in August 2012. A brief update on what had been received since that time was produced in November 2013. This report, which is again in two parts, represents an update on mortality forms received since that time and on forms relating to living hounds received since August 2012. In this first part of the 2015 report, results of the survey of Otterhound mortality are reported.

Methods

The Confidential Survey of Otterhound Health and Mortality was launched in February 2011 on the Animal Health Trust (AHT) website. A letter was sent to the Otterhound Club and the Otterhound Club of America explaining the aims of the survey and how to participate, and this was distributed to members of these clubs. Survey forms were available to download from the AHT website and could then be either emailed or posted to the AHT.

The mortality survey form used was the same as that used in the 2009 World Health Survey. The survey forms were created using a questionnaire design package (Cardiff TELEform[®]). The questions were developed and refined over several months and there were numerous iterations of the questionnaire before the final version was created.

Owners were asked to report all Otterhound deaths which occurred since then. November 2013. Information requested included the hound's registered name, date of birth, date of death and/or age at death, cause of death, whether the hound died or was euthanised and whether a post mortem examination was performed.

Returned questionnaires were manually entered into an Excel[®] (Microsoft) spreadsheet for analysis. Diagnostic categories were developed for cause of death by firstly grouping diseases by organ system affected. Organ system categories included cardiac, gastrointestinal, immunologic, orthopaedic, neurologic and renal. Additional categories were included for behavioural, cancer and sudden death. A category for "old age" was used when either age or old age was stated as the cause of death. Age at death is reported as median (minimum – maximum) as is appropriate for skewed data.

Results

Since the last survey report in November 2013, 15 Otterhound deaths have been reported. Nine of these Otterhounds had been part of the 2009 World Health Survey, one become part of the survey in 2012 and five were new to the survey. The number of deaths reported is too low for much statistical analysis to be useful, but summary results are presented here. Two hounds had died while the remaining 13 hounds had been euthanized. Median age at death was 10 years (3 years and 9 months - 14 years and 2 months). Deaths reported here had occurred between February 2012 and January 2015. Post mortem examinations had not been performed on any of the 15 hounds. One of the hounds which had died had lived in Switzerland, one in New Zealand, three in the USA and ten in the United Kingdom. Cause and median age at death for the 15 hounds are shown in Table 1. The two most frequently reported causes of death were cancer (40%) and "old age" (33%).

Table 1. Cause of death or euthanasia and median age at death.

Cause of death	Number of hounds		Total number of deaths	Median age at death
	Died	Euthanised		
Cancer ¹	0	6	6	9.6
"Old age" ²	1	4	5	12.25
Neurological ³	0	2	2	7.9
Cardiorespiratory ⁴	1	0	1	6.6
Unknown illness	0	1	1	8.8
TOTAL	2	13	15	

¹ 2 splenic haemangiosarcoma, 1 mast cell tumour 1 pancreatic tumour, 1 heart tumour, 1 cancer of ear, 1 type and location unspecified

² 2 old age, 1 old age + cancer, 1 old age + hindlimb paralysis

³ 1 cluster seizures, 1 canine degenerative myelopathy

⁴ 1 acute heart failure

Discussion

These results, albeit from a small number of hounds, are consistent with those of previous surveys of mortality in the Otterhound. The most frequently reported causes of death have consistently been cancer and old age. The median age of death was 10 years; thus, the median age at death is remaining relatively constant at between 10 years (in 1997, UK) and 10 years and 9 months (in 2003, USA).

Acknowledgments

The assistance of The Otterhound Club and The Otterhound Club of America is gratefully acknowledged, with special thanks to Judith Ashworth of Kingstree Otterhounds. Many thanks to all the Otterhound owners who diligently completed survey forms.