

Common conditions of pedigree dogs: vet and breeder opinions

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Pedigree dog health and welfare is a contentious issue. Little evidence exists on the health problems veterinary surgeons (VS) and pedigree dog breeders (PDB) most commonly encounter, or whether these are predominately inherited or acquired in nature. This study aimed to identify (1) the most common problematic body systems (BS) encountered in each of the 10 most registered breeds in the United Kingdom; and (2) the BS thought to have the biggest impact on the welfare of each breed based on VS and PDB opinion. PDB were recruited through the Champdogs website and VS, via both an existing contact list and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons' Register of Practices. Data were collected by electronic SurveyMonkey questionnaires. VS and PDB were asked to rate the 3 most commonly affected BS per breed. The datasets were totalled to give overall values for each BS. Data on welfare impacts were analysed as reported. Responses were received from 150 VS and 385 PDB. In Cocker Spaniels (CS) and Staffordshire Bull Terriers (SBT), VS rated the most common affected BS to be dermatological (CS: 29.5%, n=110; SBT: 30.4%, n=103) but PDB identified ocular problems (CS: 33.3%, n=36; SBT: 26.7%, n=16). In Labrador Retrievers (LR) and German Shepherd Dogs (GSD) both VS and PDB identified musculoskeletal conditions to be most common ([GSD] VS: 32.6%, n=123; PDB: 27.3%, n=39; [LR] VS: 35.8%, n=135; PDB: 32.2%, n=49). Fewer differences in opinion were seen on welfare issues. Both VS and PDB of Cavalier King Charles Spaniels (CKCS) and Boxers (B) rated cardiovascular issues as the biggest welfare issue ([CKCS] VS: 68.7%, n=79; PDB 50%, n=13; [B] VS: 45.8%, n=49; PDB: 47.6%, n=10). These data suggest that VS and PDB have differing views when identifying BS affecting pedigree dog health. PDB possibly focus on inherited conditions whereas VS focus on both acquired and inherited disease.