

Pyrexia In Juvenile Australian Dogs: 124 Cases

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Pyrexia is a common presentation in young Australian dogs. This large case series examines the final diagnoses, breed distribution, and outcomes in dogs under 18 months old with pyrexia of greater than 24 hours duration.

Medical record databases of 11 Australian emergency and referral hospitals between 1/1/2020 and 31/1/2025 were searched to identify dogs under 18 months old presenting with pyrexia. Cases were included if the duration of pyrexia was at least 24 hours. Information extracted from the medical record included signalment, history (including previous treatment), duration of clinical signs, peak body temperature, results of diagnostic tests, and final diagnosis.

124 cases were identified. 55% had an immune-mediated diagnosis, 28.5% infectious, and in 16% no diagnosis was made. The most common diagnoses were steroid-responsive meningitis/arteritis (29%), hypertrophic osteodystrophy (8%), aspiration pneumonia (8%), and immune-mediated polyarthritis (5%). The most common breeds were mixed breed (14%), Kelpie (12%), German Shepherd (11%), Border Collie (11%) and Corgi (6%). 83% recovered, 7% were euthanased, 7% lost to follow up, and 2% died.

Immune-mediated disease should be the top differential diagnosis for a dog under 18 months old presenting with pyrexia, but diagnostic testing to exclude infectious disease in this population is indicated. This is the largest study of pyrexia in juvenile dogs in Australia, and infection was more common here than in similar international studies. These data may be useful for a broad range of veterinarians in clinical practice to inform their diagnostic testing and treatment choices.

References:

1. Black VL, Whitworth FJS, Adamantos S. Pyrexia in juvenile dogs: a review of 140 referred cases. *J Small Animal Practice* 2018;60(2):116-120.