

Long-term Outcomes In Australian Shelter Cats Exposed To Feline Coronavirus

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Cats are commonly exposed to feline coronavirus (FCoV), a highly contagious gastrointestinal virus responsible for development of feline infectious peritonitis (FIP), a life-threatening condition. Long-term outcomes after FCoV exposure, including the risk of FIP and other health conditions, have not been previously studied in Australian cats.

A retrospective cohort study was performed with a population of cats from a shelter in Sydney, NSW. FCoV exposure status was determined by faecal viral nucleic acid detection testing performed on the day of admission to the shelter. Long-term outcomes were measured via an online survey distributed to cat owners after adoption, including questions regarding the development of FIP, and owner-reported health conditions and behavioural concerns, and subsequently correlated with exposure status to determine the overall impact of FCoV exposure on the cats' health.

Faecal viral nucleic acid detection results were available for 3433 cats, with 712/3433 positive results, corresponding to a FCoV prevalence of 21%. The online survey was distributed by email to a subset of owners (72%, 2641/3433) after adoption, based upon availability of contact details. The survey response rate was 34% (882/2641). 7/882 (0.7%) of cats had been diagnosed with FIP, and 3/882 (0.3%) cats lived in a household where another cat had been diagnosed with FIP. These results are comparable to FIP prevalence studies in referral populations overseas. Further analysis is ongoing to compare these findings to the commonly cited risk of FIP in FCoV-exposed cats, 5-12%.

References

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