

Press Release

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Landmark research heralds new era in dog heart treatment and longer life for dogs

Global QUEST study reveals dogs with congestive heart failure have significantly improved survival outcomes with Vetmedin® (pimobendan)

Ingelheim/Germany, 4 September 2008 - Veterinarians and dog owners are today welcoming new research that delivers the promise of an extended happy life together for millions of dog owners and their pets. The three-year study demonstrates that dogs suffering from the most common type of heart failure live on average 91% (267 days vs. 140 days) longer when treated with the product Vetmedin® (pimobendan) compared with another common treatment option¹.

Results from the QUEST (*Quality of Life and Extension of Survival Time*) study, published in the current issue of the *Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine*, mark a significant milestone in canine cardiac health. Experts report that 25% of all small to medium-sized dogs over the age of seven are likely to suffer from heart disease at some point in their life², and 75% of those cases are caused by myxomatous mitral valve disease (MMVD)³, sometimes known as “valvular insufficiency” or “endocardiosis”.

Adrian Boswood from the Royal Veterinary College, London, a Veterinary Cardiology Specialist and a lead-investigator on the study, explains that the independent QUEST trial set out to explore the impact on survival of Vetmedin® versus another current treatment, benazepril hydrochloride, an angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitor.

“With QUEST demonstrating that dogs treated with Vetmedin® live on average nearly twice as long as those on benazepril, it is now time for us as veterinary cardiologists and practising veterinarians to look again at how we are treating our patients suffering from this serious condition.”

Dr. Michael O’Grady from the Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph, a fellow lead-investigator added, “The QUEST study provides compelling evidence that dogs with the most common form of heart failure should be receiving Vetmedin® as an essential part of their treatment regimen.”

QUEST is the largest international study ever conducted looking at treatment for congestive heart failure (CHF) caused by MMVD, with 260 dogs studied in 11 countries, across three continents, over a period of three years.

The study was conducted by a team of 32 independent veterinary cardiologists from Australia, Canada, France, Germany and the United Kingdom among other countries.

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CHF caused by MMVD most commonly affects older, small breed dogs, including Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, Poodles, Chihuahuas and Dachshunds.

Symptoms of this form of heart failure that dog owners should look for include coughing, reduced tolerance for exercise, anxiety and restlessness during the night, and laboured breathing. If these symptoms are present, it is important that dog owners take their pets to their veterinarians for assessment and treatment.

“Dog owners should be encouraged by the results of the QUEST study, as it demonstrates an important treatment option for lengthening a dog’s life when it has this common, debilitating and life-threatening heart condition,” said Jens Häggström, Professor of Veterinary Internal Medicine, University of Uppsala and the other lead-investigator on the trial.

Owners now have new information regarding the best chance for enjoying the maximum time possible with their dogs suffering from the most common cause of heart failure.

“With our dogs being so important to our families, we owners should do all we can to make sure our pets are receiving the most effective treatment”, said Sally Copland, owner of Fern, an eight-year-old King Charles Spaniel being treated with Vetmedin®. “None of us want our pets’ lives unnecessarily cut short,” she added.

The full QUEST study results, providing hard evidence about the importance of using Vetmedin, appear in the September/October 2008 issue of the *Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine*.

***For more information on the QUEST study and on CHF caused by MMVD,
please visit www.questtrial.com***

¹ Häggström J, Boswood A, O’Grady M *et al.* Effect of Pimobendan or Benazepril Hydrochloride on Survival Times in Dogs with Congestive Heart Failure Caused by Naturally Occurring Myxomatous Mitral Valve Disease: The QUEST Study. *J Vet Intern Med.* 2008;22(5).

² Evans T, Johnson C, Wernham J. Cardiovascular Insight: A global study of category prospects. Wood Mackenzie. July 2007.

³ Häggström J, Kvart C and Pedersen H. “Acquired valvular heart disease” in Ettinger SJ, Feldman EC (Eds). Textbook of veterinary internal medicine: diseases of the dog and cat. 2005 (6th edition).