Christmas Greetings

With many fond wishes by this faithful messenger
Heart Testing
IWADV

Trends in IW Health from the Life Time Cardiac Study Data

submitted by Dr Mariellen Dentino

Data from the last 15 years of cardiac health testing will be presented at the National Specialty this May and then will be published in Focus and available on the web site.

The Lifetime Cardiac Study collected a tremendous amount of data. Much of the owner reported data lacked consistent follow-up and statistical analysis was not possible. However much of this is very INTERESTING even if not statistically validated and trends are noted.

NUTRITION

In data collected from 1990-1992 for a musculoskeletal disease survey only 2% of 192 respondents (and another 10% adding some fruits, vegetables and meat on a non-regular basis. 80% of the hounds were on Vitamin C. The dose was 1000 mg in most cases. Other supplements were sporadically and consisted of algae, kelp, Vit E, garlic and yeast.

The LCS data, collected from 2000-2006 had detailed diet history from 124 dogs and 19.3% of hounds were fed a raw diet and no supplements were used which is a different nutritional history than found in our study hounds.

Owners reported 14.7% of their hounds were overweight and 18% reported their hounds were underweight. There were not enough hounds consistently reported over or under weight to see if this was reflected in cancer incidence or length of life. This is certainly a difficult call for owners who think their hound is substantial instead of overweight. The Irish Wolfhound Foundation is now working with Dr. Lisa Freeman of Tufts University to address these interesting questions. You may have noticed Dr Tyrell adding another measurement to your hound’s data at the EKG/echo clinic at Delaware Valley. And you will be asked to note your hound’s physical description of body weight with yearly updates for the LCS 11 study.

Exercise

The IW is the largest of the galloping hounds and exercise patterns were reported for 68 hounds. All these hounds had regular exercise 3 to 7 days a week with 40 hounds engaging in galloping on a regular basis. Exercise duration averaged from 15 to 45 minutes per session. No hound under 7 years was unable to walk at least a mile. This is a very small number of hounds but the number engaging in routine strenuous exercise is impressive. Certainly there is a bias as owners who value this are more likely to report on this parameter.

Twenty two hounds in this cohort were in Afib at entry into the study or went into Afib during follow up. Eight hounds with atrial fibrillation reported a rapid decrease in exercise tolerance after the onset of heart failure symptoms while 14 reported a gradual decrease in exercise tolerance. The numbers are too small to advocate fitness leading to a less rapid decline in exercise capacity in hounds developing atrial fibr.

BLOOD TESTS

Published data for the Greyhound, our close relative, documents blood test results outside the normal ranges for many commonly run laboratory tests. Results for thyroid blood levels in the IW are published and are lower than in most other breeds. A lower than usual platelet count and white blood cell count have been suggested in the IW. Results for blood tests in the LCS show 110 hounds had a cwc with only 8 showing any abnormality. Seventy six hounds had electrolyte panels run with only 4 abnormalities reported.

Only 8 of 85 hounds had an abnormality reported on liver enzyme tests. 69 hounds had a calcium check and all were normal. Sixteen of 61 urinalysis were abnormal (a test more often done for symptoms) and 13 of 81 blood tests for kidney function were abnormal.

This preliminary data did not note if these blood tests results were from routine screening done to evaluate illness. With the low percent of age of abnormal electrolyte, complete blood count, liver enzyme and calcium values it appears the IW falls within normal parameters for these routine blood tests.

The highest incidence of abnormality was for renal function tests-kidney failure is asymptomatic until severe disease is present and it is in the top 10 causes of death in the IW. It seems most likely these numbers reflect the incidence of kidney dysfunction rather than suggesting the IW does not fall in normal range for these blood tests - remembering the creatinine may be high normal due to the relative large muscle mass.

SYMPTOMS and HEREDITY OF CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE in the IW

Heart failure in the IW is different than in the Great Dane, Doberman, or Boxer. Atrial fibrillation is the first sign of heart disease in the great majority of IWs and only about half the dogs with Afib actually die of heart failure.

The incidence of swelling of the abdomen or legs was low compared to other breeds - only 6% of owners noticed this. 33.8% of the hounds had gradual worsening of fatigue and decreased appetite. 4% had coughing and 30.9% of owners noted increased panting with mild activity progressing to panting at rest. 61% of the hounds in Afib and all the hounds with congestive heart failure were on some form of heart medication-most commonly digoxin. Hounds lived longer with heart failure in the latter half of the study but there were not enough hounds followed to learn anything about time to start these meds or if some meds are better than others. Certainly extrapolating from human treatment of congestive heart failure, medication reduces symptoms and extends life.

Atrial fibrillation is an inherited problem in the IW. An autosomal dominant pattern has been suggested. In other species modifiers must be present as some hounds are found to have Afib at 3 while littermates are unaffected until 7 or 8. Only 9 hounds with atrial fibrillation whose owners reported health knowledge of relatives did not have known relatives with Afib. As the study progressed more and more hounds had parents or siblings develop Afib. This data will help with efforts to locate genes for atrial fibr as we continue to generate longitudinal health data and store blood for DNA on as many hounds as possible.

STRESS

In humans stress is a known risk factor for heart disease. Some hounds are obviously more stressed by heart testing by traveling etc. We looked at data from hounds with a normal EKG except for a heart rate of greater than 160 on screening EKG - this can be a sign of stress. There were 38 hounds with Afib. These hounds did not have a premature death or went into Afib during follow up. Eight hounds with atrial fibrillation whose owners reported a rapid decrease in exercise tolerance after the onset of heart failure symptoms while 14 reported a gradual decrease in exercise tolerance. The numbers are too small to advocate fitness leading to a less rapid decline in exercise capacity in hounds developing atrial fibr.

Best Regards,
Doug Marx – IWF President

Give the Gift That Keeps on Giving...

An IWF Donation is a great gift idea for “the hard to buy for”. Designate it In Honor Of or In Memory Of that special person or hound. Remember your generosity is tax deductible! Use the donation form on page 8.
Rescue Update From Texas, One Year Later

by Ann Sur, SCWC, Rescue Chair

September 12th of this year marked the one year anniversary of the seizure that has been referred to as The Texas 72. Out of such a tragic event the wolfhound community came together and has continued to support the ongoing efforts of this rescue. For over fourteen months, you have followed the journey through articles submitted, presentations given, and first hand accounts shared. There were many challenging aspects due to the number of hounds. We were faced with uncertainties and  short term expectations. Such is the nature of Rescue. I have written updates on some of the more enduring stories that pulsed at our hearts when they were first introduced, as well as many comments on several hounds at different stages of progress. It is hard to fathom that some hounds can still not be touched but it is even more difficult to comprehend where they started.

The one year anniversary was first recognized on the private facebook page for the Texas 72 to acknowledge my thanks and appreciation for the committed foster and adoptive homes and the progress made, the mentors for their contributions, as well as the volunteers and SCWC Rescue Committee who were key in this success story. I acknowledged the ongoing support from the IWF and the IWCA who's financial support enabled success. I can’t thank you enough.

As I continue to monitor behavior and health of these hounds I want to recognize the continued need for committed people but also the need for planning and communication. We had tools that helped: the IW Help survey that allowed us to tap into a database of volunteers, a private facebook page and assigned mentors that allowed foster to share, documents that outlined processes and procedures, and forged relationships with experts and suppliers. My hope is that no group ever has to go through an event like this, but sadly, that is not realistic. My wish is that we are better prepared next time by strengthening our rescue network, sharing best practices of processes and procedures, and having an action plan in place. I’ll always be committed to rescue; that’s what I do. The tide is, at times, misunderstood, and under constant scrutiny or criticism. To all those that do rescue work, I understand and you have my support.

At this writing, there are only four challenging hounds of the Texas 72 left to face. A few updates and comments follow, on these you’ve met and a few maybe you haven’t. All of the homes have expressed thanks for the support they have been given and the opportunity to be involved in the lives of their hounds.

#687 Albert

Albert was in the first group of hounds that left the Houston SPCA bound for Dr. Mercer’s residence. This group included those needing more extensive medical attention. Albert was one of the few at the HSPCA that actually liked people. He was under weight with little muscle tone, at the time suffering from infections, low thyroid, a weak immune system and hip dysplasia. It took months of treatment before his ears were clear and his infected and swollen feet took on a more normal appearance.

#681 Quincy

In September 2014, Quincy left the HSPCA with her foster family that had also been in the group on the first day of the seizure. Quincy remained in temporary care due to her facial expression, she was very thin and skittish but able to be handled. She would cover near the doorways at her foster home not knowing what to do with outdoor space. She gradually started to accept her newly found freedom and was a great stride with house training. Her infected ears were treated with prophylactic ear cleaning solution. Early on it was noted that she showed difficulty eating and had bouts of diarrhea. Her teeth were dirty and broken. She became one of the first recipients of a palette of Royal Canin donated by Food Bank. Dental surgery was scheduled, and after her recovery, she was placed in her foster-to-forever home. She joined the Miles’ household February 2015, along with their beloved shepherd, Bella, and a tiny poodle Maltese. Soon after the loss of Bella to cancer, Quincy started having symptoms including vomiting, lethargy and fever. An x-ray of advanced prostate was followed by an emergency spay. To complicate things further, a gasoanesthet was performed to remove an obstruction.

Quincy is a resilient girl, has fully recovered and has also moved out of her “safe room”. She has more energy, seeks out pets, and grows more attached to canines and humans on her highly anticipated evening walks. She was one of the special guests that attended the One Year Presentation at the IWCA and Prestonwood Kennels. She has finally settled in, started to truly enjoy life as it should be, and most important, she is home.

Due to his thyroid meds, Albert is quite the hairy guy. His face is shaved due to chronic skin issues and makes him more comfortable.

#704 Brendan

Brendan left Prestonwood Kennels for San Antonio with the Prices October 2014. At that time, he was quite thin and heartworm positive. His disposition was very calm and there were no initial challenges with getting him into a vehicle except for the four hour ride from Houston to San Antonio. Brendan is at ease with his new playmates, Scottie - a mixed breed Scottish Deerhound, and Quinn - a mixed breed Irish Wolfhound.

In the first few weeks, Brendan learned to go up and down the five stairs from the house to the backyard. He was easily housebroken and has always enjoyed meals. Not a big toy or snack dog, he was quite content to eat, have his ears scratched, and lay down in the family room.

Over the last year, Brendan has learned to play and interact with Scottie and Quinn, although he is less energetic than they are. On his recent heartworm test, he came up negative, which was wonderful news. Brendan enjoys walks and rides in the car and is always a big hit wherever he goes. From time to time there are get-togethers with the other Houston rescue living in San Antonio and Brendan seems to recognize them. We think Dougall and Brendan might be brothers.

The Prices are happy to have Brendan sharing their lives. They know it’s been a tough road for Brendan, but are convinced that he is happy. They do their very best to ensure he gets the love and attention he has always deserved.

Bairre

Ginny

#745 Baire and #746 Ginny

I remember visiting Ginny at Prestonwood Kennels in Houston. I never saw her stand or even move. I would sit in her kennel like the other volunteers in hopes she would become more comfortable to alien beings. Originally fostered by a wonderful couple in Austin that does Great Dane Rescue, Baire was unlike Ginny who had challenges to overcome. While Baire quickly adapted to his environment, Ginny remained hidden or anything but invisible. Baire enjoyed walks with his Dane buddies while Ginny hid behind a chair and had to be carried outside.

Both Baire and Ginny now reside in their forever homes with rescued Golden Retrievers as playmates. Baire is a goodwill ambassador and doesn’t know a stranger. He has accompanied his owner, Eileen, to softball games, festivals and the state capital. During Ginny’s one year check, Baire came for a visit and the two were reunited. It was a good day.

Ginny continues to make her own progress at the Biba’ s and her car ride or leash are still too daunting. She will accept a collar, sleeps in her owner’s bedroom, joins the family to watch TV and wants to be close. Ginny is happy, will come snuffle her owners but remains uncomfortable about being touched. Her owner told me it was “love at first sight”. Even though they could not make comfortable eye contact, Ginny gave her a lick on the hand at their first meeting. They realize it will take time before Ginny is entirely comfortable with his strange new world. That is all right with them. They have the time, and the patience. Ginny is worth waiting for.

Dedicated bench to Guinnette Peebles and Prestonwood Kennels commemorating One Year Anniversary of 2014 Texas 72 Seizure.
The national parent club canine health conference was held August 7-9 in St. Louis. Investigators reported on multiple topics and areas of research being sponsored by the Canine Health Foundation which provides matching funds for breed club supported research. Dr. Frank R. Abrams and Marcellen Dennino addressed the meeting at the IWCA and IW.

The first talk discussed stem cell therapy for supraventricular tachycardia and introduced concepts of regenerative medicine. This was very informative and there are already practical applications to canine injuries. Dr. Yau-long Pan presented an excellent talk on canine dementia and nutrition for the elderly. Dr. Mary Kerec provided information on the many tests available for brucellosis and recommendations as to the timing of testing. Each of the breeding pairs should be tested.

Cognitive problems in aging canines was discussed by Dr. Gary Landsberg, a diplomat of both the American and European Colleges of Veterinary Behaviour. The cognitive dysfunction syndrome can begin around age 6-8, when defects in learning and memory can be documented in the laboratory environment. Diet, supplements, drugs, and improvement in the environment can all be helpful. The WFW plans to add a short section to the lifetime cardiac study 11 form to evaluate if this is a not yet discussed problem in IWs.

Osteochondrosis is one of the most common reasons for vet visits in large breed dogs. Dr. Brian Saunders presented new considerations for treatment using osteochondral plugs. These are hydropgels seeded with adult mesenchymal stem cells. The initial study will determine which stem cells more effectively reconstitute native cartilage, or bone. This may be a significant new therapy for orthoarthritis.

The following presentation by Dr. Dominique Grifin reviewed cranial cruciate ligament disease—very commonly seen in Labrador retrievers but also known to afflict large breeds including IWS. She has recently presented a non-invasive evaluation technique to predict risk of this problem which is felt to be 25% genetically influenced but 75% influenced by diet/environment. Dr. Joan Coates presented a very impressive body of work on degenerative myelopathy with discussion on the clinical presentation and progression of this dreadful disease. This is similar to ALS in humans and there has been the basis for important advances in understanding and treatment . Over 100 dogs were seen by a veterinarian with expertise in this area. Dr. Ned Patterson discussed the difficulties in identifying dogs at high risk of developing seizures by genetic testing. They are working on devices to predict seizures and thus decrease the amount of sedating medications dogs must take.

Dr. Holger Volk gave an overview of current available seizure medications and their side effect profiles. He also discussed the role of diet and supplements in controlling epilepsy and the need for more research in this area.

Irish Wolfhound Foundation - Rescue Grant Report

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Update on the Houston, TX rescue hounds: Out of the six hounds still needing new homes, one female was euthanized due to kidney disease. Another female has been placed in her forever home. So, the total left is now down to four - 2 intact males and 2 spayed females. To all of you who have adopted one of these rescued or donated funds for their care...many thanks!

Jean A. Minnier – IWCA & IW Foundation – Rescue Chair

The four puppies of Lily a TX 72 Rescue born about a month after she was placed in her forever home.

The Irish Wolfhound Foundation gratefully acknowledges contributions from the following supporters:

- Linda King
- IMO: Mary Ryan’s “Luke”
- CH Enmead Baritone, Jean Roland, & Lynn O’Leary; also IMO: Anne Janss
- Margaret La Rosa
- Dixie Lemons
- Steve LeVan
- Maxine Martens
- Jean Minnier
- Jean & Harry Minnier
- IMO: Joan MacNamara
- L. Kim Morris
- Rana Mariko Murphy
- Carol Noel
- Mary O’Malley
- IMO: Shannon Gracie, Finnegan, and Ceili
- John and Sheila Peyton
- Sheila Peyton
- IMO: Joan MacNamara
- Kenneth Pohl
- Ginger Quinn
- Jennifer Wray
- Linda Dugar Reiff
- IMO: Joan Suplee
- Mary MacNamara
- Deb Richgeraden
- IMO: Brian Harvey
- Rocky Mountain Irish Wolfhound Association
- Cherry Rolle

The Irish Wolfhound Foundation, Inc.

Treasurer’s Report

Balances are as of 10/19/15

| General Fund | $187,237.96 |
| General Endowment Fund | $121,168.15 |
| Rescue Endowment Fund | $24,384.72 |

Disbursements: $12,298.28

$10,541.41 Health
$2,756.87 - Rescue (including TX-72)
This Holiday Season Give The Gift That Keeps On Giving!

All donations to The Irish Wolfhound Foundation are tax-deductible.
Please use my contribution for the following:

____ Research       ____ Education       ____ Rescue       ____ Wherever it's needed most

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