

Pups sign up for bid to boost pet health

July 1 2010

Thousands of Labrador Retriever owners are being asked to help find out how a dog's lifestyle affects its health.

The Dogslife study, the first project of its kind, aims to assess how factors such as diet and exercise can influence an animal's susceptibility to disease and illness.

The initiative, led by the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies and The Roslin Institute at the University of Edinburgh, aims to recruit thousands of Labrador Retriever puppies less than a year old. [Pet owners](#) in the UK can volunteer to take part in the study during the next 12 months, providing their puppy has been registered with the Kennel Club after 1 July and is six months old or less when joining.

Each month owners will be asked to input details of their dogs' life, such as what they eat, how much exercise they have taken and their health, on to a website - www.dogslife.ac.uk.

Each dog will have its own web page. The interactive site nature of the site is designed to appeal to [dog owners](#) of all ages.

Owners will be able to see how their pets compare with other puppies over time as they grow. The website will also give details on findings of the project in real time as information is collected.

Dylan Clements, from the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, said: "Labrador Retrievers are the most common breed of dog in the

UK. The data from Dogslife will provide valuable information on how dogs are looked after by their owners across the UK.

"We hope that assessing the lifestyles and health of a large number of dogs will make it possible for us to identify factors contributing to common illnesses. Ultimately, this may enable us to provide owners with advice on managing their dogs and prevent them developing diseases in future."

The £100,000 project is funded by the Kennel Club Charitable Trust. It is being run in collaboration with the Centre for Integrated Genomic Medical Research at the University of Manchester, Faculty of [Veterinary Science](#) at the University of Liverpool and The Kennel Club.

Caroline Kisko of the Kennel Club said: "[Dogs](#) are not able to talk to us and in veterinary consultations when owners describe their dog's lifestyle it's not always possible to give the full picture. This study will look at how a dog's [lifestyle](#) and environmental factors affect the dog's health over time and through this we can ensure better treatment through education for owners on the best care for their pets."

Provided by University of Edinburgh

Citation: Pups sign up for bid to boost pet health (2010, July 1) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-07-pups-boost-pet-health.html>

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