

# It's a dog's life: Doggy database aims to define pet health

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Using data collected about Labrador Retrievers, research published in BioMed Central's open access journal *BMC Veterinary Research* is beginning to quantify the health, illnesses, and veterinary care of dogs.

The UK is a nation of pet lovers – but what do we know about the health of our pets? To date the long term (longitudinal) study of canine diseases has been patchy, relying on information from referral centers and details about pet illnesses which are not reported to a vet have never been studied before.

The [Dogslife internet-based project](#) was organized in conjunction with the Kennel Club. From the 1st July 2010 the owners of all Labrador Retrievers born after 1st January 2010 and registered with the Kennel Club were invited to be part of the project. In the first year of the study 1407 dogs were enrolled in the study.

Early results to come out of this study show that four out of ten of all dogs were ill at some point. Analyzing their data the researchers estimated that about 80% of dogs had been ill by the time they were one year old – but that only half were considered by their owners to be ill enough to need to visit the vet.

Discussing the Dogslife project, Dr Dylan Clements from the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies and The Roslin Institute, which are both part of The University of Edinburgh, and lead author of the study said, "Labrador Retrievers are the most popular pedigree dog in the UK,

and breeders and owners are passionate about the health of their pets. We are extremely grateful for the time and commitment provided by owners and breeders contributing to the study. We hope to follow the health of these dogs throughout their lives so that we can identify aspects of care which might reduce the risk of [dogs](#) developing disease in the future."

**More information:** Dogslife: A web-based longitudinal study of Labrador Retriever health in the UK, Dylan N Clements, Ian G Handel, Erica Rose, Damon Querry, Carys A Pugh, William ER Ollier, Kenton L Morgan, Lorna J Kennedy, Jeffery Sampson, Kim M Summers and B Mark de Bronsvort, *BMC Veterinary Research* (in press)

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