

Hope for dogs with most common cardiorespiratory disease

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Dr Uechi and Dr Niek Beijerink prepare Prince for the surgery. Credit: University of Sydney

Open-heart surgery to address the most common cardiorespiratory disease in dogs has been performed for the first time in Australia, at the University of Sydney's Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

Every year [mitral valve disease](#) (MVD) kills thousands of dogs in Australia, and millions worldwide. There is no cure and death usually occurs within a year after symptoms of [heart failure](#) being diagnosed.

The only exception to this is a surgical procedure developed by Dr Masami Uechi, Director of Jasmine Veterinary Cardiovascular Medical Centre in Japan, which has added years to the lives of dogs affected by the condition.

Dr Uechi, accompanied by five of his surgical team, flew to Australia to perform the [open heart surgery](#) last week with University of Sydney School of Veterinary Science specialists.

"We're excited and grateful that Dr Uechi and his team could perform this surgery at our clinic. It is an unparalleled opportunity for us to assist with the surgery," said Dr Niek Beijerink, the veterinary cardiology specialist who took part in the operation.

"It means that we'll be able to start the process of learning how to perform the [surgery](#) ourselves on Australian dogs and hopefully prolong many of their lives."

Dr Beijerink invited Dr Uechi, who he has known for many years, to come to Australia.

The six-hour operation was performed on Prince, a 10-year-old male Cavalier King Charles spaniel who was diagnosed with severe heart failure due to MVD earlier this year.

The operation was a success and promises to extend Prince's life by many years.

Provided by University of Sydney

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