

French bulldogs at risk of various health problems

May 2 2018



French bulldog puppy. Credit: BioMed Central

French Bulldogs, predicted soon to become the most popular dog breed in the UK, are vulnerable to a number of health conditions, according to a new study published in the open access journal *Canine Genetics and Epidemiology*.

Researchers at The Royal Veterinary College (RVC), UK found that the most common issues in French Bulldogs over a one year period were ear infections, diarrhea and conjunctivitis (inflammation of the eye surface).

Dr. Dan O'Neill, RVC Senior Lecturer and the main author, said: "French Bulldogs are a relatively new arrival to the list of common UK breeds so there is very little current research on them in the UK. Our study—the first on this [breed](#) in the UK—is based on anonymised records gathered from hundreds of UK vet clinics. It provides owners with information on the issues that they could expect and should look out for in French Bulldogs. It may also help potential new owners to decide if a French Bulldog really is for them."

Dr. O'Neill adds: "One of the interesting finding from our research is that male French Bulldogs appear to be less healthy than females. Males were more likely to get 8 of the 26 most common [health](#) problems while there were no issues that females were more likely to get than males."

The authors suggest that the distinctive appearance of the French Bulldog, with their short muzzles and wide, prominent eyes, may be a key factor influencing their popularity. However, these characteristics may also increase the risk for some of the health problems seen in French Bulldogs. For example breathing issues, seen in 12.7% of the dogs in this study, are a known problem in breeds with short noses and flat faces. Skin problems overall were the most common group of health issues and the authors suggest that this may be due to the skin folds that are characteristic of the breed.

Dr. O'Neill said: "This study also documents the dramatic rise in popularity of the French Bulldog, from 0.02% of puppies born in 2003 to 1.46% of puppies born in 2013. This level of population growth in a single dog breed is unprecedented. There is a worry that increased demand for the French Bulldog is damaging to these dogs' welfare

because of the health risks associated with their extreme physical features."

The authors analyzed data on 2,228 French Bulldogs under veterinary care during 2013 from 304 UK clinics, collected in the VetCompass database. The French Bulldogs had a median age of 1.3 years old compared to a median age of 4.5 years for the other dog breeds in the VetCompass database. This reflects the growth in popularity of French Bulldogs.

The authors caution that the study may even under-estimate the true number of dogs with health problems as the data may include more severely affected animals that require veterinary management. Additionally, as French Bulldogs have only recently become popular the data was mostly collected from young dogs and it is well recognized that [health problems](#) generally become more common with age.

More information: Dan G. O'Neill et al, Demography and disorders of the French Bulldog population under primary veterinary care in the UK in 2013, *Canine Genetics and Epidemiology* (2018). [DOI: 10.1186/s40575-018-0057-9](#)

Provided by BioMed Central

Citation: French bulldogs at risk of various health problems (2018, May 2) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-05-french-bulldogs-health-problems.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.