

Research finds that neutering Rottweilers may affect their lifespan

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Owners of a popular dog breed are being encouraged to keep their pet pooch in tip-top condition after a James Cook University study found that Rottweilers could suffer from reduced lifespan after being neutered.

The work is [published](#) in the journal *Scientific Reports*.

A recent analysis of available clinical records collated by VetCompass Australia of 3,085 intact and 4,100 neutered Rottweilers from July 1994 to June 2021 found those [dogs](#) neutered before one year of age had a shortened lifespan of one-and-a-half years in males and one year in females when compared to their intact counterparts.

Dogs neutered before the age of four-and-a-half years produced similar results.

"Most other studies have found that neutering dogs increases their longevity but ours is one of the first that went against that," study lead author and JCU Senior Lecturer in Veterinary Reproduction Dr. Carolynne Joone said.

"It was a bit of a shock when that wasn't what we found. We were fortunate with the data we had because we could determine when a dog was desexed and when they died."

Despite the findings, Dr. Joone strongly encouraged owners to neuter their dogs, suggesting that owners should focus on managing their dog's weight gain, which was common after the procedure.

"There are serious consequences for not neutering a dog, such as the risk of a life-threatening uterus infection known as Pyometra, [mammary tumors](#) and unwanted puppies," she said. "There's a strong suspicion that the reduced lifespan is more to do with weight issues than the neutering itself, so I would encourage owners to go ahead and neuter their dog but make sure you keep it at a good, healthy weight."

While it is currently unknown whether there is an optimal age to neuter a Rottweiler that does not impact their lifespan, the study noted several

factors that could influence the lifespan of a dog, including [genetic predisposition](#), nutrition, exercise, health care, and [environmental factors](#)

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Screening for genetic disorders and selecting healthy breeding pairs may also help reduce the prevalence of hereditary health conditions in Rottweilers and help boost their longevity.

Dr. Joone said she now wanted to expand her study to other popular dog breeds, such as greyhounds and Golden Retrievers, to see if the results could be replicated.

JCU Senior Lecturer in Information Technology Dr. Dmitry Konovalov was a co-author on the study.

More information: Carolynne J. Joonè et al, The effect of neuter status on longevity in the Rottweiler dog, *Scientific Reports* (2023). [DOI: 10.1038/s41598-023-45128-w](#)

Provided by James Cook University

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