

Please help research on bone cancer in wolfhounds!

Not long ago scientists finished decoding (sequencing) the dog genome. Now this important new resource is used by a consortium of scientists to find genes responsible for canine diseases such as bone cancer (osteosarcoma). This is a large international project that already has funding and experienced scientists.

Devastating bone cancer is a significant health concern in Irish Wolfhounds – it is estimated to kill over 20% wolfhounds regardless of their country of origin. The research team composed of Swedish and US scientists is searching for regions of the genome that differ between healthy dogs and dogs with osteosarcoma and wolfhounds are one of the main breeds they want to study. This research will help to develop genetic tests to identify carriers of osteosarcoma, which can be used by breeders to eventually, over many years, exclude these defects from the wolfhound population. It may also lead to a new treatment.

Ultimately, results of the project will lead to a decrease of number of sick hounds and improved treatment and survival rates in dogs and in people with bone cancer as there are appear to be large similarities in the dog and human osteosarcoma, particularly the kind that affects children.

To succeed at this, though, your help is needed! Needed are blood samples from dogs that are sick with osteosarcoma and dogs that are healthy. The research team is ready to start the experiments but to do so and succeed in the analysis they need more samples – unfortunately genetic studies require many participants to be successful. Blood samples of wolfhounds are currently collected in many countries of the world. This is a unique opportunity for our breed as such study is extremely expensive and requires very advanced equipment and staff. If we can collect samples, the wolfhound community will gain access to the existing facilities, which are top research centers in the world – for free!

What can you do?

* Healthy dogs: If you have a healthy wolfhound (especially one that is 6 years or older), a blood sample would be very appreciated. If your hound would become sick from any cancer after the sample was taken please let the researchers know!

* If your dog has osteosarcoma, please ask your veterinarian to draw a blood sample and send it together with the clinical information.

Of course all the information about your hound is strictly confidential and will only be accessible to the involved scientists. We will not be able to tell you now if your particular hound will develop cancer – we do not know the genetic factors responsible for it yet – this is the goal of the project.

There will be a possibility to donate blood samples during the IW Congress in Slovenia. Blood samples will be taken by a professional entirely free of charge. Blood samples will be taken on Saturday May 24th during hours: 12.00-18.00 at the site of exhibition.

If you would like to donate your samples at other time during the Congress please contact Anna Blom who will be at site and she will try to arrange it. Every owner must fill in consent form and provide a copy of a pedigree.

If you would like more information about the project please contact anna.blom@med.lu.se