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Anthrozoology

Choosing the right cat

Medicine

Achieving Diabetic Remission – How can you help?

Anthrozoology

Companion animal loss: grief and the role of the veterinary team

Behaviour

Introducing cats to babies and children

Feline diabetes – is remission achievable? See more page 8



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Meet the team

Daniel Cummings BSc (Hons)
Behaviour Officer

How long have you worked for CP? Eight months.

What did you do before working for CP? I was a behaviourist and trainer for the Dogs Trust, helping develop people's training skills and rehabilitating dogs. Prior to this I worked at Battersea.

What is your role within CP? As the Behaviour Officer, I provide behavioural support for cats in care and those rehomed. I create resources to improve people's understanding of cats and their needs.

What do you like most about your job? Helping the care-givers understand why cats do what they do and how to address feline behavioural issues. My philosophy is: happy cat, happy owner.

What is your most memorable CP moment? My first regional CP conference – I've never had such a whirlwind of new faces and pretending to remember people's names!

Do you/did you have a pet/-pets? I grew up with dogs and cats (and guinea pigs, rabbits, degus chinchillas, terrapins and budgies). I currently don't have a pet as I live in rented accommodation. Thankfully, the CP Advocacy team is encouraging landlords to promote pet-friendly housing through their Purrfect Landlords campaign www.cats.org.uk/purrfectlandlord

What are your hobbies/other interests? I love movies, obstacle runs, photography and juggling.

If I wasn't doing this, I'd probably... Be a tambourine player in a Bob Dylan tribute act.



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Choosing the right cat for you

Helen Crofts RVN explains the importance of the right feline fit

One of the most exciting parts of acquiring a new cat is the visit to your local animal adoption centre where you will have the chance to meet lots of lovely cats all looking for a home.

However, before you get completely bamboozled by the rows of cute, furry faces all begging for your attention, have a think about what sort of cat is really the best fit for you and your domestic situation before you leave the house. The first step to starting a long and lasting friendship with a cat is choosing the cat that's right for you. This decision is hugely important because a cat is a living, breathing being who will need your care and attention for the next 10, 15 or even 20 years. Get it wrong and it could lead to a long stretch of disappointment and unhappiness for you both. There are so many cats out there, and so many kinds of cats to choose from, it can be hard to know where to begin.

To start off with, think about your own lifestyle. Are you a quiet person who wants a cat who will

be content to sit on your lap all evening or are you looking for a cat that is more attuned to the outdoor life, only popping into the house for short visits now and again? How much time and energy do you really have to spend on looking after a kitten? Would it be better to choose a cat who is already attuned to life in a busy family? Once you start to ask yourself these questions you will begin to realise that there is more to choosing a cat than it would first appear. While pondering the answers to these questions it may help to consider the following:

Kitten or adult?

Kittens are adorable, curious, playful and full of energy and are often the ones that grab most people's attention the moment they walk through the door. Staring into their huge eyes it can be easy to forget that they can also be exasperating at times and demand lots of supervision and patience to keep them out of trouble. An important fact that many people also fail to consider is that a kitten is an unknown entity—you really don't know what kind of cat you'll end up with once they outgrow their kitten personality.

Adult cats are usually calmer, less bouncy, and less mischievous. With an adult, what you see is usually what you get, so if you are looking for specific qualities, consider cats that are at least a year old.

Keep your family in mind. Kittens and very young children usually don't mix well, as kittens can be fragile and young children a little heavy handed. Babies and toddlers tend to grab the closest part of a cat, be it tail, ear, or fur, and they can't resist giving the cat a great big hug. This will most likely not be appreciated by the cat and it may give the child a warning swipe, or worse, a nasty bite.

Once you start to ask yourself these questions you will begin to realise that there is more to choosing a cat than it would first appear.

Many cats with special needs make wonderful companions



Personality

Cats, like people, are individuals. Some cats are very mellow and will tolerate any kind of handling. These cats are perfect for young children or older people who want and appreciate this type of cat.

Many cats don't like being picked up or held and will only interact with you when they feel like it. For this reason it is important to look past the looks of a cat and appreciate what sort of relationship it has to offer you. It may be beautiful but it may be uninterested in full immersion into a loud family home! It's a lesser known fact that cats also have varying degrees of energy: some prefer to nap all day, while others are constantly on the go. If you are looking for a mouser, you'll need to pick the one who isn't asleep all day!

Medical conditions

Consider offering a home to a cat with a disability. Many cats with special needs make wonderful companions and these are often the ones that are most in need of a home. They might be older, deaf, blind or have an illness that requires regular medication, but this doesn't affect the amount of companionship and pleasure they have to give; it just means some extra commitment and understanding on your part to meet their needs for the rest of their lives. It is worth enquiring about the cost of any medication a cat may be on so that this can be factored in to your decision.

A cat with a disability is more likely to need to be an indoor-only cat to keep it safe and therefore would be a perfect candidate for adopters who do not have gardens or who prefer to have a cat who will be indoors all day.

It is important to look past the looks of a cat and appreciate what sort of relationship it has to offer you.



Coat type

This is mainly a matter of preference and your willingness to devote time to regular grooming. Long-haired cats require daily grooming sessions to prevent matting but not all cats enjoy being brushed and it may be necessary to factor in regular clipping sessions at the vets to keep the coat in good condition. Short-haired cats don't require as much brushing, but the occasional groom does help to remove loose fur, stimulate the skin, and distribute oils through the coat. A cat who likes being groomed will come running when they see the brush.

Existing pets

If you already have pets, you should consider their needs before bringing home a cat. Cats are a solitary species and do not need 'friends'. While some cats live in harmony with others this is not a given and there are many that would really prefer to live life as the only cat in the household. Some cats are able to tolerate other cats if they are introduced into the home carefully, but sometimes it can be impossible to achieve harmony between the two. Some cats are perfectly happy as an only cat and could really resent a newcomer. The more cats you have, the more potential problems you invite; the cats may become stressed and develop undesirable behaviours such as spraying urine, fighting or hiding.

If you bear all of these factors in mind when choosing your next cat, the chances are you will find your perfect companion.

Helen Crofts

RVN A1



Helen is a registered veterinary nurse and has spent many years working in private practice. After making the move to the charity sector, Helen is Cats Protection's Veterinary Support Supervisor. She has lots of hands on experience with cats alongside a wealth of knowledge on general cat care and welfare. She is also a qualified Clinical Coach.



Achieving Diabetic Remission – How can you help?

Sarah Spencer & Dr Ruth Gustelow – optimising factors to improve glycaemic control and potentially achieve diabetic remission

Unlike dogs, diabetic cats are capable of remission, which is defined as persistent euglycaemia for at least four weeks without insulin or oral hypoglycaemic therapy [1]. Remission is highly desirable in feline diabetes mellitus (DM) as it removes the need for frequent veterinary visits and daily therapy. However, remission should not be considered a major treatment goal as it is not achievable in every cat. Most feline diabetics develop hyperglycaemia due to pancreatic β -cell dysfunction alongside peripheral insulin resistance (Type 2-like DM), but a substantial proportion is diabetic for other reasons, such as hypersomatotropism (acromegaly) or diabetogenic drug treatment. Adequate remaining β -cell function is required for remission, and it will also be encouraged by addressing factors causing insulin resistance. Remission is potentially attainable in ~75% of cats

Figure 1: Use of handheld blood glucometers for home blood glucose monitoring by owners can be useful to improve glycaemic control and also to identify the onset of remission.



with hypersomatotropism-associated DM [2] and a reasonable proportion of cats with Type 2-like DM. Hypersomatotropism is the focus of a second article in this series, whereas the current article focuses on remission, including factors associated with it, how to recognise it, and finally how to manage cats in which it is successful.

Factors associated with diabetic remission

No single test or patient characteristic at the time of diagnosis reliably predicts remission [1]. It is possible with different insulin types, dosing protocols, and diets, and is even reported in cats treated with oral hypoglycaemic drugs. Studies mirror those in people with Type 2 DM, in that remission is most likely in individuals who have a shorter duration of disease, achieve more

Continuous Blood Glucose Monitoring Systems (CBGMS)

Although traditionally primarily used in the research or hospital setting, CBGMS are increasingly used for home glucose monitoring to facilitate identification of hyper- and hypoglycaemia. They allow for a better understanding of a cat's response to therapy and can guide insulin dosing for tighter glycaemic regulation, ultimately increasing the chance of remission.

CBGMS are usually well-tolerated and can provide real-time or retrospective data which can be downloaded and reviewed by the attending veterinarian (Figures 2 and 3). Disadvantages include expense, daily calibration with blood glucose values obtained by another method, and restricted monitoring range.

rapid glycaemic control and have less severe hyperglycaemia before treatment [1]. These findings support the hypothesis that a major mechanism for remission is reversal of 'glucotoxicity' to β -cells.

Early institution of good glycaemic control

Many people consider this to be the most important contributing factor for remission. Promptly achieving good glycaemic control is likely to limit the deleterious effects of glucotoxicity on β -cells. Despite remission being possible with all insulin types, long-acting insulins, such as protamine zinc insulin (PZI), glargine, and detemir are more effective at promoting good glycaemic control and remission in cats compared to lente insulin [3, 4]. Recent International Society of Feline Medicine guidelines therefore state that these insulins are equally suitable for treatment [5] and as the only feline-licensed, long-acting insulin in the UK, PZI is the recommended choice in this country. Several early studies documented particularly high remission rates (64-100%) using either glargine or detemir with the aim to normalise, or near-normalise, blood glucose concentrations [6-8]. These studies used protocols that required frequent blood glucose monitoring and therefore translate poorly into practice as this may be unachievable for many cat owners. Protocols that aim for euglycaemia also pose an increased risk of hypoglycaemia. Furthermore, a recent prospective, randomised trial found no difference in remission rates between glargine or PZI therapy [9].

Home blood glucose monitoring (HBGM) is a valuable tool in managing diabetic cats and may aid in achieving effective, prompt diabetic control. Additionally, HBGM allows for rapid recognition of hypoglycaemia and for the onset of remission. Several studies demonstrate that HBGM is possible for many cat owners [10, 11] and educating owners on the possibility of remission could provide an additional incentive to adopt it. Traditionally HBGM has employed handheld glucometers (Figure 1), but continuous glucose monitoring devices are increasingly being used (Figures 2 & 3; Box 1). Such devices record frequent interstitial glucose measurements and can provide an extended period of monitoring (up to two weeks) without the need for repeated sampling and hospitalisation.



Figure 2 and 3: Continuous blood glucose monitoring is being increasingly used to understand glycaemic control in individual diabetic cats. Devices are usually well-tolerated and can provide data over a prolonged period of time.

Diet

Commercial feline diets derive on average 40% of energy from carbohydrates, despite cats being obligate carnivores. Provision of a low carbohydrate diet reduces demand on β -cells to produce insulin. Low carbohydrate, high protein diets containing $\leq 12\%$ ME or $< 3\text{g}/100\text{ kcal ME}$ as carbohydrate are therefore recommended in diabetic cats due to their potential to improve glycaemic control and increase remission rates [5]. Some authors recommend ultra-low carbohydrate diets ($< 6\%$ ME from carbohydrate). No studies have formally assessed ultra-low carbohydrate diets but as the highest remission rates have typically used diets with a carbohydrate content of $\leq 12\%$ [6, 12], it seems justifiable to reduce carbohydrate content as much as is tolerable. 'Wet' (canned/pouched) diets are lower in carbohydrate than dry formulations. Meal frequency and timing (ie with insulin administration or not) appears unimportant when feeding a low carbohydrate diet, as significant postprandial increases in blood glucose are unlikely.

Management of obesity

Many diabetic cats are underweight at diagnosis and management of these patients should aim to regain a healthy bodyweight. However, obesity is a recognised cause of insulin resistance and a predisposing factor for feline DM [13, 14] (Figure 4). In overweight cats, planned weight loss will encourage remission by reducing obesity-associated insulin resistance [9,15]. Regular bodyweight and body condition score monitoring should be used to assess the efficacy of weight loss programmes and to monitor for undesirable weight gain. Weight gain should also be avoided in cats that achieve remission as developing obesity increases the chance of diabetic relapse.

Discontinuing insulin-antagonistic medications

In people, drug-associated DM is considered distinct from Type 2 DM, and ideally, any therapy that may be predisposing to a hyperglycaemic state should be discontinued in diabetic cats. The most common example is corticosteroids. Cats that develop DM following corticosteroid treatment show greater diabetic remission rates [7]. Aside from the removal of corticosteroids' insulin-antagonistic actions, this might be because these cats may have a more abrupt onset of clinical signs, leading to a more rapid diagnosis.

Identification and management of concurrent disease

Rapid diagnosis and management of any concurrent diseases that contribute to insulin resistance will likely improve a cat's glycaemic control and chance of remission. In particular, cats with hypersomatotropism-associated DM usually respond poorly to routine diabetic management, but can achieve high remission rates when treated with hypophysectomy (surgical pituitary gland removal) [2]. Similarly, diabetic cats with underlying hyperadrenocorticism can experience improved DM control and remission following successful surgery or radiotherapy [16, 17].

Other factors

Older cats who develop DM are more likely to achieve diabetic remission, possibly reflecting a slower disease progression [18]. Cats with diabetic neuropathy (usually manifested as peripheral neuropathy causing hind limb weakness) are

less likely to go into remission [19], presumably because neuropathy occurs late in the disease and thus represents a more chronic hyperglycaemic state. Individuals with higher serum cholesterol concentrations were less likely to achieve remission in one study [18].

How to recognise remission and when to stop insulin

Remission can be challenging to recognise and is most likely to occur within six months of diagnosis [7]. In some cats, remission will be signalled by resolution of DM-associated clinical signs. Identifying parameters that suggest persistent normoglycaemia or near-normoglycaemia, such as normal fructosamine concentration, negative urine glucose



Figure 4: Obesity is a risk factor for feline diabetes mellitus and controlled weight loss increases the chance of remission. Keeping previously diabetic cats at ideal body weight also decreases the risk of relapse.

Current trial to uncover the genetic basis of type 2-like DM in Burmese cats

The Royal Veterinary College (RVC) is currently collecting samples from European diabetic Burmese cats to uncover the genetic basis of this disease in this breed using ground-breaking, whole-genome sequencing. Diabetic Burmese cats are eligible for a FREE fructosamine measurement through the RVC laboratory and residual blood will contribute to our research. For more information on the project, and to download a sample submission form, please visit: <https://www.rvc.ac.uk/research/research-centres-and-facilities/clinical-investigation-centre/projects/investigation-of-genetic-risk-factors-of-diabetes-mellitus-in-european-burmese-cats>, or contact fdrc@rvc.ac.uk

measurements and persistent euglycaemia on blood glucose curves, is useful. Remission may also be indicated by biochemical or clinical hypoglycaemia in some cats. The process of insulin withdrawal depends on the cat's presenting signs and the veterinarian's clinical suspicion for remission. Sudden cessation of insulin therapy might be required in cats presenting with clinical hypoglycaemia, whereas cats with persistent normoglycaemia can initially undergo a substantial insulin dose reduction, followed by gradual withdrawal [5].

Relapse and management of cats in remission

Most cats in remission will have abnormal residual β -cell function and mass, and should therefore be considered as 'pre-diabetic' and at risk of relapse. Around one in five previously diabetic cats have impaired fasting glucose concentrations (ie mild hyperglycaemia, >6.5 to ≤ 10 mmol/L) and around three-quarters have decreased tolerance to a glucose challenge test [20]. Blood glucose concentration should be measured regularly (eg initially weekly for two to three months then monthly) to allow rapid detection of relapse. Low carbohydrate, high protein diets should be continued and maintaining a normal body condition is important. Diabetogenic drug therapies, eg corticosteroids, should be avoided.

Ultimately, 25-30% of cats in remission will relapse and require exogenous insulin once more. The median reported duration of remission is three to five months [18, 20], although some cats achieve remission for many years. Chance of a second remission appears to be much reduced ($<25\%$ cases).

Novel therapies

The incretin hormone glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) has many potential benefits in DM, including enhanced insulin release, inhibited gastric emptying, increased satiety and potential β -cell proliferation. GLP-1 analogues have therefore become a mainstay of therapy in Type-2 diabetic people. The long-acting GLP-1 agonist, exenatide extended-release, was recently assessed as an adjunctive treatment in newly-diagnosed diabetic cats treated with glargine and low carbohydrate diet [21]. Increased remission rates were achieved in exenatide-treated cats compared to controls, although this difference did not reach statistical significance, possibly due to small sample size. Incretin therapy warrants further investigation as a method of increasing glycaemic control and remission rates in cats, and possibly for the prevention of relapse in cats in remission.

Conclusion

Diabetic remission is an increasingly-recognised outcome in feline DM and is hugely beneficial for both cat and owner. Attaining early, good glycaemic control, and promptly addressing underlying causes of insulin resistance will maximise the chance of remission. There is limited strong evidence to support a specific insulin type when aiming for remission, although long-acting insulins are likely to be beneficial.

References available on request

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Sarah is a European Specialist in Small Animal Internal Medicine currently undertaking a PhD on feline chronic kidney disease at the Royal Veterinary College. She underwent her residency training and undergraduate veterinary teaching at the University of Bristol. Sarah has a keen interest in feline medicine, in particular endocrine disease, geriatric conditions and infectious disease. At home she has two adoring tortoiseshell-and-white cats (sisters), Verity and Isla.

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Companion animal loss: grief and the role of the veterinary team

Dr Karen Hiestand BVSc, BSc, MSc, MA, MRCVS

There is increasing recognition that for many people their animal relationships are as important as those held with humans, even to the degree where animals can serve as children substitutes (Image 1). The vast majority of people who choose to share their lives with animals will experience their companion's death, yet societal and cultural expectations of grief over this loss are hugely variable. Anything from flushing of the proverbial goldfish to the modern growth in funeral rites and compassionate leave can accompany the death of a companion animal. While many companion animals will undergo a 'natural death' (albeit often in traumatic circumstances), the option of euthanasia is accepted and commonly practiced in veterinary as opposed to human medicine. Due to companion animals' legal status as property, the decision of when and how they die is nominally under the jurisdiction of the owner. This places a burden of decisions about death in the hands of those who are usually emotionally closest to the animal. As a contrast, in human medicine, the medicalisation of death has been said to have reduced the role of those closest to mere bystanders with far more limited decision making and direct participation in the act of death.

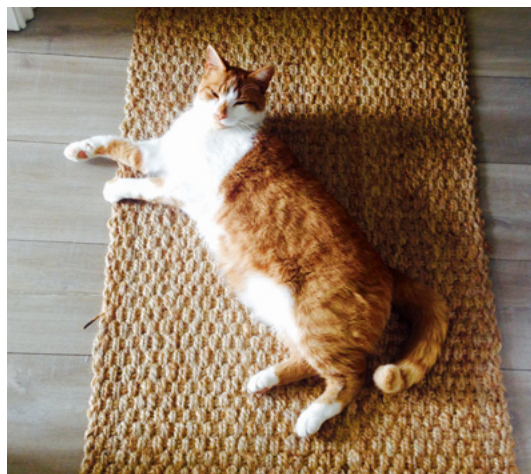
Owner experience of non-human animal death

There is huge variation in acceptance of grief for companion animal loss. This relates to both societal norms about what is acceptable and widely variable views about the moral status of animals; in general, by species and by the context they are in. The result of all this variation can actually increase the effects of loss on those left behind. Those confronting the emotional effect of companion animal loss

can experience a 'disenfranchised grief', whereby others do not recognise their loss and grieving and some authors suggest that traditional services for grief management have previously ignored the importance of the human-animal bond, leaving a void in emotional and practical support.

Studies have found the key narrative for owners after the loss of a companion animal was a search for understanding of their feelings and reactions. Participants looked to their social support network, society more broadly and also the veterinarian to comprehend their feelings and how to express them appropriately. Those bereaved, struggle with a contradiction between their internal feelings and the perceived absence of support from others and society in general. A struggle to control internal grief and reduce outward appearance can actually increase the need for expression, which can lead to a greater degree of stress and psychological suffering.

Image 1: The author's first child, Dexter 01.06.08 - 09.05.16



Companion animal loss is further complicated by the requirement for owners to participate in difficult choices regarding how the animal dies. Euthanasia decisions often carry a degree of confusion and create emotional burden including guilt and other difficult emotions that complicate the grieving process. Owners not only make decisions, but particularly in the case of euthanasia, many are present at the time of death and even participate by holding the animal and viewing body immediately prior, during and after death. The medicalisation of human end of life care has resulted in a reduction of direct experience of death and often owners remain ignorant of the realities of physical mortality such as agonal gasping, muscle twitching, vocalisation, loss of bladder and bowel control etc. For many, the death of a companion animal is the first passing they experience first-hand and the participation in companion animal death can be a far more intimate and immediate experience than many have with human death.

Veterinarian role in grief management

Some owners believe having animals die a 'natural' death at home will be less stressful than choosing euthanasia. However, research has shown owner grief after euthanasia was less than when animals died of natural causes. The authors speculated this was due to support provided by veterinary staff which protected owners from the emotional conflict that arises from social isolation and that owners' perceived control over the death of their companion during euthanasia actually appeared protective against more negative grief experiences. It is certainly true that veterinary staff is called upon to provide emotional support to owners who can perceive a lack of understanding from their usual support networks. Some owners regard the veterinary clinic as a judgment-free environment where expressions of grief over companion animals is accepted – more so than those emotions will be accepted in wider society.

Veterinary surgeons do the best they can in providing a euthanasia experience that is as positive as possible for both the animal and its family. We consider both technical aspects – the most appropriate drug combinations, venous access, sedation, catheter placement etc. and what has been referred to as the 'dramaturgy' of euthanasia. There is debate among vet over methods, with a movement in home visiting euthanasia services advocating sedation and intra-peritoneal/renal/ cardiac drug administration with the result a far slower passing, while others prefer the security of a catheter and quick IV. Research into owner experiences would be advantageous here to understand what their preferences are in regards to being able to hold their animal, whether they prefer a slower, 'going to sleep' method compared to the sometimes shocking suddenness of an IV administration.

With experience, we all develop our own unique calming and understanding 'euth voice' and standard patter of explanation of what is going to happen and what those attending ought to expect. In her discussion of the dramaturgy of veterinary euthanasia, Morris (Blue Juice 2012, p. 59) highlights the use of 'back' and 'front' stage procedures. Back stage, certain practical and potentially upsetting tasks may be carried out. Whereas, in the front stage, veterinary staff will employ multiple techniques to control the experience for the benefit of the animal and owner. This may include ritualising the procedure and employing at times a significant degree of acting to project the required empathy (regardless of the vet's true feelings), presentation of the body in relaxed or sleeping poses and various verbal techniques to help owners cope with the experience. Owners are increasingly wanting to remain present and veterinary clinics might offer quiet rooms, staged cremation services with various urn and casket choices for returned ashes. The veterinary role in these circumstances

It is certainly true that veterinary staff is called upon to provide emotional support to owners who can perceive a lack of understanding from their usual support networks

can increasingly be viewed as approaching that of a funeral director.

Ritual and memorial play a hugely important role in the grieving process and the absence of standard rituals for losing an animal can inhibit the grieving process and reinforce the perceived 'insignificance' of companion animal loss. Companion animal death does not yet involve the level of symbolic and practical arrangements that a human death does, but the provision of ritual surrounding companion animal death, particularly euthanasia, is increasing. Studies suggest a growth in the use of full funeral services for animals, for example Japanese funeral rites for companion animals have been described as simplified forms of human rituals with 465 companion animal temples in operation as early as 2002.

Services to support companion animal loss remain relatively rare compared to those for human loss leaving those seeking assistance with few choices. Some bereaved seek emotional support from cremation and pet cemetery services and these providers can see this as an important part of their role. Historically, veterinarians rarely received any specific training in grief counseling, however a number of training courses are now offered both by charities and commercial enterprises. Veterinary businesses that recognise the important role clients

wish them to play in emotionally supporting them through companion animal death can benefit significantly from providing good bereavement support and advice. It is common for clients to change vets after euthanasia due to the negative associations made with a practice – however, given appropriate consultation time, training and willingness, veterinary clinic staff can provide the support and experience necessary to not only ease the grief of the owner, but bond them to the clinic should they require veterinary services in the future. It is worth considering whether a range of grief support and rituals might be suitably offered by veterinary practice, and it is possible that the extent of ritual desired by some owners may exceed expectations.

Veterinary staff are certainly not immune to the emotional impacts of engaging with companion animal death and owner grief often multiple times per day. Morris (2012, p. 13) highlights the 'tremendous emotional burden' veterinarians can be under from the 'performance' of euthanasia. Placing emphasis on the importance of euthanasia and supporting clients experiencing grief may also allow greater understanding and acceptance of the consequences for veterinary team stress and mental health.

Image 2: Companion animals are an important part of family relationships



Summary

Grief over companion animal loss is complicated by inconsistencies in individual and social beliefs over the moral status of those animals. While there is growing recognition that companion animals can occupy positions emotionally comparable to family members and that their loss can result in the need for grief support commensurate with this status, availability of resources for this support are limited and often fall to sometimes poorly equipped and time strapped veterinary services. Companion euthanasia is commonplace and while it can afford the opportunity for increased ritual, which can be helpful to the grieving process, it also carries its own emotional toll on those concerned. Further acknowledgement and research into companion animal loss is required, as is further training for those on the front line of providing grief management.

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Dr Karen Hiestand

BVSc, BSc, MSc, MA, MRCVS



Karen trained in New Zealand and worked as a mixed vet for a number of years in her home country, locumming across the UK and as a volunteer overseas. She has worked extensively in animal welfare charities and veterinary education and continues to provide welfare and ethics teaching to veterinary schools and animal welfare organisations. Karen has Masters degrees in Applied Animal Behaviour and Welfare, Medical Ethics and Law, a BSc in Psychology and is embarking on a PhD at Sussex University investigating empathy between animals and humans.

Introducing cats to babies and children

Nicky Trevorrow BSc (Hons), PG Dip (CABC), RVN By taking steps to prepare cats and children properly from the start, owners will have a content cat and happy children

Growing up with cats can be a wonderful experience. While an owner's attachment to cats can take different roles as discussed in the human-animal interactions literature, many people consider their cat as part of the family. Cats are often viewed as confidants by children who feel they can tell their cat anything, creating a strong bond between them. Whether owners are considering adding a new feline into their family or are thinking of starting a family and may be wondering how their cat will respond to the newcomer, veterinary practice staff are in an ideal position to advise owners in order to make the transition go as smoothly as possible for all involved. Unfortunately, an owner either being pregnant or having a new baby in the family still results in around 500 cats being relinquished annually across Cat Protection. However, this figure may be higher for those owners who do not declare the exact reason, as 'the owner cannot cope' or 'doesn't want the cat anymore' accounts for over 4,000 cats annually.

Preparing your cat for a new arrival

In all the excitement of preparing for the arrival of a new baby, it can be easily overlooked for owners to 'tell' their cat. As a creature of habit, which thrives on routine, cats can find change stressful. Babies are accompanied with lots of new paraphernalia, such as toys, cots and prams, as well as a change in routine. While some of the behaviours which cats may show in response to the surprise arrival of an infant can appear on the face of it to come across as jealousy, it is an important message to reassure owners that cats are not jealous of babies! Current scientific thinking is that it is not thought that they are capable of the feeling the emotion of jealousy. Simply the novelty of the sights, sounds and smells can be unsettling for a cat which likes everything in their environment to be just so.

Starting preparations as early as possible will set the cat up to succeed. Owners should gradually introduce new baby items to their cat to help ease them into the changes, allowing them to investigate

While some of the behaviours which cats may show in response to the surprise arrival of an infant can appear on the face of it to come across as jealousy, it is an important message to reassure owners that cats are not jealous of babies!



Behaviour

it at their own pace. Prams and cots make very cosy places for a cat to sleep, so to avoid temptation, it is best to keep these items away from the cat once they have had a good sniff! One of the key ways to help a cat adjust is to gradually get them used to baby crying sounds. This can be easily achieved by playing short clips very quietly and building up the time and volume at the cat's pace over time. Small treats can be used to reward calm behaviour and help the cat to form positive associations with the sound as well as any baby equipment. Cats Protection have recently produced a Sound Socialisation CD for Kittens, which is also available as a free download on the website and includes the sound of a baby crying – www.cats.org.uk/kitten-sounds

A place of tranquillity and calm

Even cats which are comfortable around babies or children need a 'sanctuary room' with all their important resources inside so they have a safe, quiet retreat. A spare bedroom works well. Baby gates can be used so the room is out of bounds for babies and children, but easily accessible for the cat. Some baby gates even include cat flaps. Amending the environment to provide safe places out of reach of children can make cats feel safer if they can watch events taking place from an accessible high vantage point, which could take the form of a high window sill, cupboard top or add some cat shelves.

Learning by example

Most young children have a natural affinity for animals and this has been shown in various cultures around the world. Interactions with babies and very young children need to be carefully managed as the soft fur can be very tempting to grab. As soon as they are able to understand, very young children can be taught to be kind and respectful with cats, including how to interact with cats, stroke them gently and allow the cats to approach on their own terms. It's important to explain that cats like to be left alone when sleeping or eating and that they can become frightened when people shout, make sudden movements or try to grab them. Children can be taught to understand basic cat body language such as the classic tail up greeting as well as learning to interpret the signs of an unhappy cat – the swishing tail, ruffed-up fur or hissing – and will avoid doing things that upset them.

Interactions with babies and young children need to be carefully managed as the soft fur can be tempting to grab



Hugging is natural behaviour for people (also commonly seen in great apes), but is not a normal behaviour for our pets. This situation is frequently misinterpreted by people as it looks very cute and appealing from our perspective. However, the difficulty is that as cats are extremely subtle in their behaviour, signs of the cat feeling uncomfortable or stressed such as licking the nose, ears turned out to the side, turning the head away, swallowing out of context, and dilated pupils, can be easily missed. Helping children to develop empathy and understanding cats from the cat's perspective is very rewarding and helps to create the foundations for a positive bond. Cats Protection's Education Team deliver fantastic talks to children in schools to increase their understanding of cats' needs and learn about body language. Additionally there are a variety of useful resources on the website, which could be used for waiting room displays.

Introducing cats to babies and children

Much like with introducing cats to other cats or dogs, it is imperative that this is done gradually and at the cat's pace. Cats need to feel in control of the interactions and be able to escape or watch from afar if necessary. Encourage owners to start as they mean to go on from day one. All children and cats are such individuals with unique personalities and therefore introductions need to be tailored to those involved. Children learn well from consistent, regular repetition and positive reinforcement for gentle interactions with the cat. Keep interactions short and sweet, so that it does not become overwhelming for the cat or the child does not become overexcited. Bribery in the form of small, tasty treats are an excellent way for the cat to form positive associations with the child.

By taking steps to prepare cats and children properly from the start, owners will have a content cat and happy children, and ultimately help children become responsible and caring adults.

For more information about #Kidsandkitties, visit

<http://bit.ly/yt-babies> Working closely with qualified behaviourists can help cats to transition smoothly and the Animal Behaviour and Training Council (www.abtcouncil.org.uk) have practitioner lists of qualified behaviourists and trainers across a variety of species. If owners are looking for a new cat, please suggest a rescue cat and encourage them to check out the Cats Protection website – www.cats.org.uk/adopt-a-cat

Nicky Trevorrow

BSc (Hons), PG Dip (CABC), RVN



Nicky works in Cats Protection's Veterinary Department as Behaviour Manager, implementing the charity's strategy to promote feline behaviour and welfare. Nicky is a registered veterinary nurse. She holds a BSc (Hons) degree in Animal Behaviour. She undertook an Advanced Diploma in Companion Animal Behaviour Therapy from the Centre of Applied Pet Ethology and a Postgraduate Diploma in Companion Animal Behaviour Counselling from the University of Southampton. Nicky is a full member of the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors. She's a member of the International Cat Care's Behavioural Advisory Panel and represents Cats Protection on the Animal Behaviour and Training Council.

All the latest news from Cats Protection

Cat Watch: working together to help unowned cats

With no permanent residence or owner to care for them, unowned cats (community, stray, feral) are the most vulnerable in society. Cats Protection's Cat Watch project is working with communities to control cat numbers and make sure they are looked after. Neutering unowned cats is beneficial for their welfare and prevents reproduction, reducing the number of kittens being born on the street. Consequently, Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR) campaigns are a common way to manage unowned cat populations. TNR involves humanely trapping unowned cats, neutering them and rehoming them wherever possible. In situations where cats are not socialised and consequently unsuitable for rehoming they are returned to their familiar environment. Research led by Cats Protection, recently published in *Frontiers Veterinary Science*¹, highlights the importance

of working with communities while delivering TNR campaigns in urban areas. Local insight and active engagement of residents with TNR is valuable to ensure unowned cats are found and helped both now and into the future. Additionally, local residents are key to ensuring the welfare of those cats that remain on the streets by providing water, food and shelter.

Recent work in Bulwell, Nottingham supported residents to report unowned cats, enabling hotspot areas to be identified and targeting TNR. This helped unowned cats that would not have been found otherwise. By actively engaging with residents, our preliminary study highlighted that attitudes, perceptions and knowledge can all underpin behaviour towards unowned cats. Such information can be used to help overcome any barriers to helping cats in the community. Consequently, Cat Watch has provided support to enable people to help stray cats, raising awareness within the community and changing human behaviour, effectively improving the welfare of unowned cats and preventing kittens being born into a life on the streets.

Cats Protection's Cat Watch teams are continuing to work with many communities across the UK where barriers to helping cats are often entrenched in broader community problems. Going forward we hope to better understand and overcome the barriers to helping cats, empowering residents to help us curb the unowned cat overpopulation problem and ensure those that remain on our streets have a good quality of life.

1McDonald JL, Farnworth M, Clements J. Integrating Trap-Neuter-Return Campaigns into a Social Framework: Developing Long-Term Positive Behaviour Change Towards Unowned Cats in Urban Areas. Frontiers in Veterinary Science. 2018; 5:258.





Cats Protection appoints new Chief Executive

Cats Protection welcomed its new Chief Executive on 1 November 2018.

James Yeates joins the charity from the RSPCA, where he has been Chief

Veterinary Officer since 2012. As a qualified vet with degrees in Veterinary Science and Bioethics and a PhD, James has experience in ensuring the welfare of animals in all species. He is also a cat lover, and currently shares his home with his tortoiseshell cat called Monkey.

"It is a great opportunity to join such an amazing organisation as Cats Protection," said James. "It is a profound honour to join with such inspiring people – volunteers and staff. A proud history and a bright future - to be part of that is an undeserved privilege."

In addition to his experience as a vet, James is also a Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) Registered Specialist in Animal welfare, science, ethics and law, a Diplomate of the RCVS and the European College of Animal Welfare and Behavioural Medicine, and a Fellow of the RCVS.

James joins the UK's leading cat welfare charity in its 91st year and help guide our work helping around 200,000 cats a year through a national network of over 250 volunteer-run branches and 36 centres.



British Veterinary Association (BVA) Ethics and Welfare Advisory Panel – Cats Protection represented/representation

Following a call for applications during

the summer, Lisa Jarvis RVN from CP's Learning & Development team was successful in being appointed as the RVN member of the BVA's Ethics and Welfare Advisory Panel. She joins the other seven members in the work of the group to provide advice to the BVA Policy Committee and policy working groups on ethical and welfare issues to consider in the development of policy, including animal health and welfare, public health, and veterinary professional issues. Priorities areas for consideration 2018-2019 include key areas of interest for CP too, the upcoming Animal Establishments Licensing legislation, supporting the #petsneedsvets campaign and the launch of the kitten checklist for example, and we are excited to have Lisa in post to be able to bring cat welfare and shelter medicine to the discussions, as well as her experience in working with the veterinary nursing profession.



Rock royalty reopens Dereham Centre

Cats Protection's Dereham Adoption Centre has officially reopened after a £1.2 million refurbishment.

Twelve cats went to new homes during the grand reopening weekend, which saw rock star Rick Wakeman, author of *The No.2 Feline Detective Agency* series Mandy Morton and Mayor of Dereham Hilary Bushell lead a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

A kind legacy left to our Framlingham & Saxmundham Branch contributed to the funding of the refurbishment, and will enable the centre to home over 500 cats a year. The new facilities set the standard for cat-care excellence in Norfolk and

improved accessibility and parking will make it easier for the public to visit.

During the open day, Mandy Morton also took the opportunity to meet two cats, Hettie Bagshot and Marley, who are named after characters in her novels before reading extracts from her latest book, *Magical Mystery Paws*, and signing copies.

Mandy said: "It was such a lovely surprise to see the two cats awaiting homes named after characters in my books. I'd have taken them both home if I could but my own cat, Betsey Trotwood, would not have been impressed. I will look forward to hearing when they go to new homes and wish the volunteers and staff at the centre every success."

BSAVA launches new Shelter Medicine manual

Shelter medicine is a newly emerging clinical discipline in veterinary medicine. It is a recognised speciality in the United States and interest is growing across the rest of the world. Shelter medicine encompasses vital aspects of physical and psychological health and welfare, infectious disease management, epidemiology, diagnostic testing and population control. The challenge of being a good shelter medicine clinician is balancing the health and welfare needs of the individual with that of the larger population from which it originates. The aim of this manual is to introduce the reader to a new way of thinking when approaching cases in the shelter environment.

The manual is divided in three sections:

- Principles of shelter medicine and population health
- Prevention, management and control of disease in the shelter medicine environment
- Working with people in the shelter environment

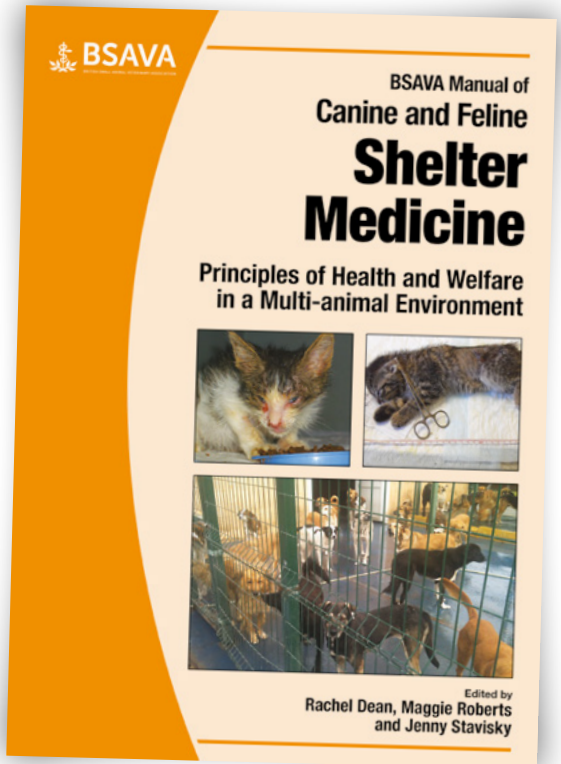
Each section also has a number of Quick Reference Guides that provide specific practical information on a number of subjects. There is an extensive resources section at the back of the book, which supports the manual content.

The first section covers the principles of shelter medicine, describing how to approach problems and be an effective decision maker within the shelter context. It includes the concepts of 'herd health' and epidemiology, which are more usually applied in a large animal context.

The second section covers the prevention, management and control of infectious diseases and the management of behaviour in the shelter environment. The major infectious disease syndromes are presented by affected body system rather than by pathogen, for ease of use in clinical situations.

The third section of the manual encompasses the 'people aspect' of shelter medicine. Providing clinical care for animals in shelters has to be done alongside the people working there and with an understanding of the objectives, policies and values of the individual organization that runs the shelter.

The editors say, "We are delighted to have



been given the opportunity to create the first edition of the *BSAVA Manual of Canine and Feline Shelter Medicine* and feel this will provide useful information for anyone who undertakes clinical work whether it be in private practice or in a charity setting. We would like to thank the many contributors to this manual for their knowledge, hard work, inspiration and patience during the production of this book. Many of them work in hugely challenging clinical environments and they work tirelessly to protect the health and welfare of thousands of animals in their care".

The *BSAVA Manual of Canine and Feline Shelter Medicine: Principles of Health and Welfare in a Multi-animal Environment* is available from the BSAVA website: www.bsava.com or by phone: **01452 726 700**. The online edition is available from: www.bsavalibrary.com.

Review copies are available upon request, please email [Ian Mellor at publications@bsava.com](mailto:publications@bsava.com)

Contact: 01452 726 718

Purrfect Landlords campaign to help give renters chance to own cats

Cats Protection has launched a major new campaign to help more people living in rented housing own a pet cat.

The UK's largest cat charity is offering free guidance to landlords and letting agents to help ensure that tenancy agreements reflect modern day living. The charity's Purrfect Landlords campaign will also help social housing providers introduce policies to ensure tenants can enjoy the benefits of cat ownership while reducing the chances of problems arising.

The charity has launched a new website full of guidance for landlords and tenants about allowing cats into their properties and addressing any concerns. The website, at www.cats.org.uk/purrfectlandlords includes free, downloadable legal wording for landlords and letting agents to add to their own tenancy agreements, setting out simple conditions on cat ownership to protect and benefit both landlords and tenants. The charity is also offering advice to help tenants speak to their landlords to ask for permission to own a cat. Landlords are often willing to be flexible, especially as tenants with pets are likely to stay for longer.

Cats Protection's research shows that less than half (42%) of private rented housing allows cats.

Jacqui Cuff, Cats Protection's Head of Advocacy & Government Relations, said: "More and more people are renting their homes either by choice or necessity, yet very few rented properties accept cats. This means tenants are missing out on being able to own a cat, while landlords may be losing out on attracting responsible and settled tenants." Jacqui added: "We hear from renters who tell us most adverts state 'no pets'. Often, the reason for not allowing cats is simply habit, with a third of landlords who don't accept cats saying they didn't proactively choose to ban cats, but instead followed a standard template or advice from a letting agent.

"The aim of Cats Protection's Purrfect Landlords campaign is to transform renting so that responsible cat ownership benefits both landlords and tenants – happy landlords, happy tenants, happy cats."

The Purrfect Landlords website also gives social



housing providers access to a wealth of information and simple tips on encouraging responsible cat ownership. Jacqui said: "In contrast to the private rented sector, where renters can struggle to find cat-friendly accommodation, social housing providers are much more likely to allow their tenants to own cats. This is great news and it's also encouraging that a huge 85% of social housing providers recognise that cats help improve their tenant's mental health.

"However, our research shows that 89% of social housing landlords do not include the requirement for cats to be neutered within their tenancy agreements, and this can lead to issues arising in communities such as unwanted cats and kittens."

Jacqui added: "Pet ownership is an important part of making a home, and we want to help more communities enjoy the benefits of cat ownership. Introducing a pet policy is a simple way of giving tenants the chance to own a cat while protecting the wider interests of the community, as well as the cat's welfare."

As well as supporting social housing providers through its Purrfect Landlords campaign, Cats Protection offers financial support towards the cost of neutering for owners on a low income. To find out more about how the charity can help with neutering, call **03000 12 12 12**.

The charity's Community Neutering Outreach scheme also works intensively with communities, landlords and other organisations in areas where there are large numbers of unneutered cats.

Cats Protection's Purrfect Landlords campaign is supported by Generation Rent, Mind, National Landlords Association, Lets with Pets and Scottish Association of Landlords.

For more information, please visit www.cats.org.uk/purrfectlandlords



We wish you a very merry
Christmas and a happy
New Year from everyone
at Cats Protection

www.cats.org.uk



*Go over to our YouTube
channel and see our short
Christmas message*

Reg Charity 203644 (England and Wales) and SC037711 (Scotland)



Fireworks

Birthdays, Bonfire Night and New Year parties, we are a nation who love fireworks

While firework displays and parties are fun for us all, our pets can often become distressed at the loud noises and lights that firework parties bring.

Our top tips to ensure your cat stays safe and happy.

Keep them in after dark, and provide them with a litter tray, food and water bowls and a place to hide. You'll need to make sure all cat flaps, doors and windows are closed to ensure your cat doesn't escape.

w: www.cats.org.uk/fireworks



Go over to our YouTube channel and see our short clip of top tips

