

# Update for the Great Dane Breed Council

---

**18 March 2017**

The last formal report we provided was in September 2016. However, we have kept in touch with progress about grant funding since then.

## ***Application to the Kennel Club Charitable Trust***

As you know, this was successful on resubmission (May 2016), and we heard on 22<sup>nd</sup> September that this funding was awarded. I think providing the evidence about the prevalence of sudden death as well as DCM in the breed, and the further support by the Great Dane community (owner registration fees for the 1<sup>st</sup> assessment, as well as from the Great Dane Breed Council). However, the funding has not so far been transferred from the KCCT, despite some reminders to Richard Fairlamb, and his reassurance that there is no problem. Our Research Support office have been reminding them recently.

## ***Funds remaining***

The original grant has been spent. The private benefactor donations have also been spent. From the £4000 donation from the GD breed council, a few hundred pounds remained (and thanks to Olivia Bates, for a letter to allow us to spend this up (it had a completion date of 31 December 2016, but we have extended this). We still have the £2000 donation from the East of England GD club. We plan to spend on these additional donations to complete these grants, before starting invoicing the new KCCT grant.

## ***Current funding***

We therefore have the current funding to continue the research:

KCCT	£42,066.00 (pending).
Remaining funding to be raised by GDBC (listed in the grant proposal)	£13,500.00 (pending)
Estimated owner registration fees (£50 each) for each new dog for Holter & biomarker study (>12 months old)	£ 7,500.00
Estimated owner registration fees (£50 each) for each new dog undergoing full screening including Echo, Holter, blood tests (>4 years old)	£ 3,750.00
Funding already received from GDBC and private benefactors to continue the research (running on these funds currently)	£ 6,740.00

Owners of new Great Danes recruited appear to be content to pay the £50 registration fee so far. This is good, as for this, for full screening, the normal value of all the tests at our hospital would be £859.20, excluding a consultation charge, so this is good value! This is despite a mistake in the dog press (later corrected) that we would pay Great Dane owners £50 for the screening (which did lead to a lot of interest). It is a concern people seem more interested in receiving £50 than the health of their dogs!

### ***Danes screened between September 2016 and now (March 2017)***

Six Great Danes have undergone full screening, including full blood work, the new cardiac biomarkers, echocardiography (aged >4 years old). Of these six, two had DCM, and 2 were equivocal. Three of these great Danes also had Holter done, so have very thorough and complete screening.

In addition, three young Great Danes have had the cardiac biomarker and Holter screening (>12 months old).

A number of new Great Danes have been booked in for screening in the coming weeks (7 between now and mid-May 2017). As ever, we are indebted to Joan Toohey for organising the Great Dane DCM screenings at this hospital.

The new cardiac biomarkers (high sensitivity Troponin I, a marker of heart muscle cell injury) and NT-pro-BNP, a marker of heart muscle wall stretch) do appear to be useful, as the values of one or both biomarkers are increased in dogs with echo and / or Holter abnormalities. However, this is early in the study, and the biomarkers should not be seen as a replacement for the gold standard Echo and Holter screening. They may show promise, and they can be regarded as a “pre-screening” – if abnormal, the Dane should undergo the full screening. If low or normal, it is most likely (but not confirmed) that the dog does not have DCM currently. However, we need to remember that DCM is an acquired disease which might not appear until later in life, so this blood test method of monitoring needs to be repeated every 12 months. I am also investigating the utility of cardiac biomarkers in Dobermanns for screening for DCM.

**Professor Joanna Dukes-McEwan**  
**BVMS, MVM, PhD, DVC, DipECVIM-CA(Cardiology), MRCVS**  
***RCVS & European recognised Specialist in Veterinary Cardiology***  
**Professor in Veterinary Cardiology**  
**Small Animal Teaching Hospital & School of Veterinary Science,**  
**University of Liverpool, Leahurst Campus**  
**Chester High Road, Neston, CH64 7TE. UK.**

Tel: 0151 795 6100. Fax: 0151 795 6101. Email: [J.Dukes-McEwan@liv.ac.uk](mailto:J.Dukes-McEwan@liv.ac.uk)