

Longevity and mortality of owned dogs in England

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Abstract

Improved understanding of longevity represents a significant welfare opportunity for the domestic dog, given its unparalleled morphological diversity. Epidemiological research using electronic records (ERs) collected from primary veterinary practices overcomes many inherent limitations of referral clinic, owner questionnaire and pet insurance data. Clinical health data from 102,609 owned dogs attending first opinion veterinary practices ($n=86$) in central and southeast England were analysed, focusing on 5,095 confirmed deaths.

Of deceased dogs with information available, 3,961 (77.9%) were purebred, 2,386 (47.0%) were female, 2,528 (49.8%) were neutered and 1,105 (21.7%) were insured. The overall median longevity was 12.0 years (IQR 8.9–14.2). The longest-lived breeds were the Miniature poodle, Bearded collie, Border collie and Miniature dachshund, while the shortest-lived were the Dogue de Bordeaux and Great Dane. The most frequently attributed causes of death were neoplastic, musculoskeletal and neurological disorders. The results of multivariable modelling indicated that longevity in crossbred dogs exceeded purebred dogs by 1.2 years (95% confidence interval 0.9–1.4; $P<0.001$) and that increasing bodyweight was negatively correlated with longevity. The current findings highlight major breed differences for longevity and support the concept of hybrid vigour in dogs.

Keywords

Dog breed; Epidemiology; Hybrid vigour; Lifespan; Primary practice

Figures and tables from this article:

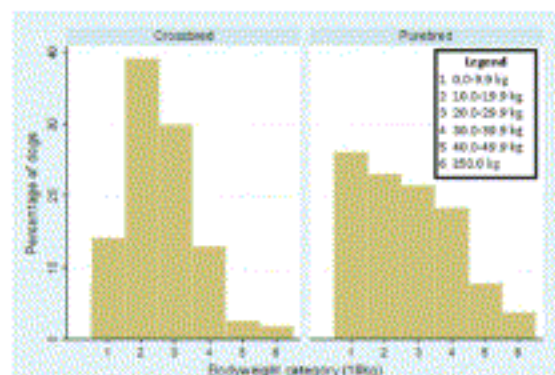


Fig. 1. Bodyweight distribution patterns (maximum recorded bodyweights for dogs aged > 1 year of age) for crossbred ($n=542$) and purebred ($n=2,023$) deceased dogs that had attended primary veterinary practices in England.