An EPIC change in the way to manage mitral valve disease in dogs.

For years, there has been great controversy about the management of canine degenerative mitral valve disease (DMVD). Data from the SVEP and VETPROOF trials offered insight but also conflicting results in regards to the use of ACE inhibitor therapy for dogs with DMVD. Even within the ACVIM Consensus statement, no consensus could be found in the treatment of patients with Stage B2 disease. Some clinicians argued for treatment with vasodilator therapy while some did not recommend any treatment until a patient would go into congestive heart failure.

- **Stage A**—Patients at high risk for developing heart disease but without concurrent identifiable structural disorders (e.g. Cavalier King Charles Spaniel without a heart murmur).

- **Stage B**—Patients with structural heart disease that have not developed clinical signs caused by heart failure.
  - B1—Asymptomatic patients with no radiographic or echocardiographic evidence of cardiac remodeling in response to CVHD
  - B2—Asymptomatic patients with hemodynamically significant valvular regurgitation as evidenced by radiographic or echocardiographic findings or left-sided heart enlargement.

- **Stage C**—Patients with past or current clinical signs of heart failure associated with structural heart disease. May or may not require hospitalization and aggressive anti-congestive therapy.

- **Stage D**—Patients with end-stage disease with clinical signs of heart failure caused by CVHD that are refractory to “standard therapy” (defined later). Such patients may require advanced or specialized treatment strategies in order to remain clinically comfortable (quality of life). May or may not require hospitalization and aggressive anti-congestive therapy.

cont’d on page 2
At the 2016 ACVIM Forum in Denver Colorado, the results of the EPIC trial (Evaluation of Pimobendan In Cardiomegaly) were presented. **CVCA is proud to have been one of the 36 sites from around the world to participate in this clinical trial.** The dogs in this study were small breeds with confirmed degenerative mitral valve disease. The patient population had signs of significant cardiomegaly based on the results of radiographs and echocardiographic data:

- Left atrial: aortic ratio >1.6
- LVEDDN >1.7 (left ventricular dimension in diastole normalized to body weight)
- VHS >10.5

Results of the study demonstrated that Pimobendan delayed the onset of congestive heart failure by about 15 months as compared to placebo. The results of this study demonstrated that Pimobendan had the greatest monotherapy benefit to delay the onset of heart failure in small dogs with stage B2 DMVD.

Photo: While Pimobendan can delay onset of congestive heart failure in dogs with degenerative valve disease, there are risks of instituting therapy too early in the disease process. An echocardiogram by a board certified cardiologist is recommended prior to initiating Pimobendan therapy.
cont’d on front page 2: EPIC change in the way to manage mitral valve disease in dogs.

However, questions still remain as to how Pimobendan would perform as compared to an ACE inhibitor like Enalapril or Benazepril or whether a combination of Pimobendan with an ACE inhibitor would be superior. There is also some question on what influence Pimobendan has on the risk of sudden cardiac death. In the EPIC study group, the incidence of sudden death was greater in the Pimobendan treated group vs. the placebo group. This may, however, have been a function of the longer asymptomatic period. A small study in the past has shown progressive histopathologic changes to the mitral valve in dogs with experimentally induced mitral valve regurgitation when treated with pimobendan. Thus, very early use of this agent in patients with valve disease can have the potential for detrimental effects as well.

Based on the data from this landmark study, it appears that pimobendan should be utilized in the treatment of patients with advanced stage B2 degenerative mitral valve disease prior to the onset of heart failure. Treatment is not recommended until a complete physical examination, blood profiles, blood pressures, chest radiographs and thorough echocardiographic studies are performed to confirm that significant enough disease is present to warrant treatment. The EPIC data supports the use of Pimobendan once signs of significant left atrial and left ventricular dilation are present, but not when the heart size is normal or even mildly enlarged. Whether better results are possible with pimobendan used in combination with other medications is still a question. The EPIC trial was a well-designed study and will change the way we treat patients with degenerative valve disease.

At CVCA we hope to continue to use the experience we have gained over the years of managing over 16,000 cardiac patients a year to help formulate treatment plans to help gain the best quality and longer lives of patients with heart disease. We will utilize this new information to help work within our community and primary care referral base to integrate the most current strategies and medical information to achieve the optimal care for these cardiac patients.

#   #   #
Opening October — NEW Columbia, MD Hospital Location

10000 Old Columbia Road
Columbia, MD 21046

Services at the new location include:

24/7 Emergency and Critical Care
Cardiology
Internal Medicine and Oncology
Surgery
Physical Therapy
Open 5 Days a Week
Richmond Location

- Dogwood Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center
- Phone: 804-497-8940
- Fax: 804-497-8941
- Email: cvcarichmond@cvcavets.com
- Web: www.cvcavets.com

Now open 4 days a week!
Fairfax in VCA Southpaws

- VCA Southpaws Veterinary Specialists and Emergency Center
- Phone: 571-348-3888
- Fax: 571-395-8434
- Email: cvcafairfax@cvcavets.com
- Web: www.cvcavets.com

Frederick in CARE

- CARE Veterinary Center
- Phone: 240-457-4387
- Fax: 240-457-4387
- Email: cvcafrederick@cvcavets.com
- Web: www.cvcavets.com
Breakfast & Learns and Lunch & Learns

Did you know CVCA offers **morning or midday** CE education opportunities at your practice (we bring the food too!). Lectures are AAVSB RACE approved so you can earn CE credits from your own hospital.

How to request a **morning or midday** in house CE:

- Visit our website at: [www.cvcavets.com](http://www.cvcavets.com)
- Click on “For Veterinarians” and the Lunch n Learn Link
- Fill out the request form letting us know the topics you are interested in and the best day of the week for you.
- Click submit and someone from CVCA will be in touch with you.

Questions, feel free to reach out to CVCA at [denise.kessler@cvcavets.com](mailto:denise.kessler@cvcavets.com).
Do you have a Supply Request Form and Client Education Binder?

Request them on our website at: www.cvcavets.com/request-supply-form.asp

- Online Referral Forms
- Supply Request Forms
  - Order client handouts, business cards, magnets, and more
  - FREE of charge to you

Questions, feel free to email Denise at: denise.kessler@cvcavets.com