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The CEO Corner

By Katie Newbold, CEO (LVT, CVPM)

Happy American Heart Month!
We are grateful for the opportunity to use this time to recognize and thank all of the veterinary professionals who support cardiovascular health in pets by spreading awareness and working with us, we so appreciate you!

Our team is honoring this month with social media quizzes, photo contests, a donation to the American Heart Association, and a wear red contest. We also celebrate all of the love from our referral community- we are so grateful to work with such a wonderful group of dedicated professionals. Wishing all of you a wonderful month!

The Case of Parsifal the Cat

By Bonnie Lefbom, DVM, Diplomate, ACVIM (Cardiology)

Parsifal is an 11-year-old male, neutered Siamese cat living the classic, happily spoiled life of an indoor cat. He presented to his primary care veterinarian last week because the owners had noticed he was over-grooming and also becoming more aloof – extremely unusual for this gregarious, interactive cat!

On presentation, the veterinarian noticed tachypnea (and a few live fleas). She ran a snap BNP that was abnormal, took thoracic radiographs that revealed pulmonary edema, gave a lasix injection and sent them all to the ER so CVCA could consult on him that same day.
Physical examination revealed no murmur, no gallop, a mild tachycardia at 200 bpm, mild tachypnea at 40 breaths per minute, fine crackles in all lung fields and no other issues. Echo evaluation revealed the classic late stage cardiomyopathy we see in middle aged and older cats – regions of concentric LV hypertrophy with regions of fibrosis, poor contractility, large atria, restrictive inflow patterns and congestive failure with low volume pleural and pericardial effusion. We recommended treatment and the owners are struggling with how to medicate a cat. Typical scenario for all.

So, what happened to Parsifal? How did he devolve into congestive heart failure and no one knew? Cats!!

Silent cardiomyopathy in cats is the absolute worst for everyone involved. Owners feel guilty because they feel they should have known earlier, primary care veterinarians feel bad because they think they should have picked up on something, and cardiologists hate it because our first interaction with the client is when they and their cat are in distress.

There is no single solution to this problem but routine use of NT proBNP has definitely improved our chances of rooting out these frustrating cases. If we can convince cat owners not only to seek routine veterinary care but also to run screening NT proBNP levels on their feline companions, everyone would benefit. The economics of screening every cat is debatable for a disease that hits 15% of the general cat population. However, as veterinarians, we can provide the statistics and recommendations and then it’s up to the owner to decide. Clients who definitely should pursue routine NT ProBNP levels are those with predisposed breeds such as Maine Coon, Ragdoll, British Shorthair, Sphynx, Chartreux and Persian cats as well as those with known littermates or families of affected cats.

Is the Snap BNP good enough?
Sometimes. As a cage side test for cats with respiratory signs, the efficacy of the Snap test to determine presence or absence of congestive heart failure is excellent. As an adjunctive test when we are trying to differentiate respiratory disease from congestive heart failure and no echo is available, it’s a great confidence builder. As a screening tool, the SNAP test will be abnormal in cats with moderate to severe disease. Only the serum NT ProBNP level will pick up more mildly affected cats. Snap BNP results can also be confusing in older cats because an abnormal result could be secondary to thyroid disease, hypertension and kidney dysfunction.

So what do we recommend?

Have the conversation. As a part of every feline wellness visit, bring up the data and let cat owners know you care about their cats’ cardiac condition. Let’s keep working together to avoid the fate of Parsifal.

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**American Heart Month 2020**

*Raise awareness with CVCA Cardiac Care for Pets!*

It’s American Heart Month and CVCA wants to give back and raise awareness for animal and human heart health. We’re all about hearts, so join us for contests and activities this whole month!

- **Weekly Quizzes - Kick-off Monday, February 3rd!** - For the entire month of February, we will be posting weekly quizzes on our Facebook page. Tune in and participate for the chance to win!

- **Frame for Fame Contest, Giving Back** - CVCA Cardiac Care for Pets is donating proceeds to [The American Heart Association](https://www.heart.org) when you change your profile frame to ours on Facebook! For every person who changes their profile frame to CVCA’s frame, **we will donate 50 cents (up to $200)**. In addition, you’re entered in our contest—if you win, we will change our cover photo to your pet’s photo for the month of March (must be a current or former CVCA patient)! One entrant (pulled from a hat) will be crowned our lucky winner! Want to help increase our donation amount? Head to our website to view the official rules [www.cvcavets.com/americanheartmonth](http://www.cvcavets.com/americanheartmonth)
• **Show us your Heart Contest** - Keep an eye out for the “Show us Your Heart” Instagram contest! We’ll post the full directions on Instagram, so stay tuned!

• **National Wear Red Day is Friday, February 7th!** CVCA offices will be wearing red to promote heart health awareness. On **Tuesday, February 11, we're having a friendly competition** and need your help. We’ll be posting photos on Facebook of Wear Red Day in our CVCA offices, and we need you to vote for the best photo by 'liking' the photos! Our winning offices get a prize, so choose wisely!

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**Upcoming Events**

**The Kentuckiana Cluster of Dog Shows**

- **Date:** Thursday, March 12th-Sunday March 15th
- **Location:** Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center, 937 Phillips Ln, Louisville, KY 40209

For more details, [click here](#). CVCA will be exhibiting, so stop by!
NEW: Referral Conversation Client Handout. Discusses what to expect at initial consultations, costs, and payment options.

Request No-Cost Client Education Materials

Our client education materials are available to your clinic at no cost. We have many available, including referral handouts like *When Your Pet Needs a Cardiologist*, and *When Your Pet Has a Heart Murmur* as well as educational handouts like *Nutritional Supplements for Cardiac Patients* and *Dilated Cardiomyopathy*. We have upwards of 20 different client handouts, including business cards, magnets, clinic posters, and more! Fill out a [Supply Request](#) form to order client materials today!

Available Client Payment Options

We know it's tough when clients have to face unexpected medical expenses for their pet. CVCA offers several payment options to help with early diagnosis and appropriate treatment before advanced stages begin.

Also, for qualified applicants, we also offer two low or no-cost options, CareCredit and Payment Banc. See our [Payment Options](#) for more information! And, for those clients that have pet insurance coverage, we recommend they contact their provider for potential coverage prior to their appointment.

If you have any questions, please email us at info@cvcavets.com.
References for "The Case of Parsifal the Cat"


Multicenter Evaluation of Plasma NT Pro BNP as a biochemical screening test for asymptomatic (occult) cardiomyopathy in cats. Fox PR, Rus JE, Reynolds CA, et al. (including Lefbom) JVIM 211;25:101-1016

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