**

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**Information Statement**

*Research Project*

**Title: Para-aural abscessation following total ear canal ablation in dogs**

**What is the study about?**

Total ear canal ablation (TECA) involves the removal of the external part of the ear canal. This is most commonly recommended for patients with severe inflammatory ear disease affecting the external ear canal or middle ear cavity. A second surgery (bulla osteotomy) is also performed to assess and remove the tissue lining of the middle ear. It is thought that if the lining of the middle ear remains, secretions will continue to be produced but cannot drain. This can lead to abscess formation and long-term discharging tracts (severe infection) following surgery. Para-aural abscessation describes the extension of infection from the external ear canal or middle ear to the surrounding soft tissues. Treatment of this complication is challenging and usually involves a second surgery to remove the infected tissue.

Our study is aiming to review patients who have had a total ear canal ablation performed and then developed para-aural abscessation afterwards. We would like to evaluate if a certain surgical technique is associated with higher prevalence of abscess development. We will look at imaging study reports and surgical reports to assess whether a specific source of infection can be identified. Culture results will be analysed to record any bacteria present. Medical and surgical treatments of para-aural abscessation will be compared for outcome, technique, infection recurrence and further complications.

**Who is carrying out the study?**

The study will be undertaken by Moira Watkins, Lara Dempsey and Stephen Baines. Moira is a senior surgical trainee (resident) at The University of Cambridge. Lara is a European and RCVS specialist in soft tissue surgery at Blaise Referrals. Stephen is a European specialist in soft tissue surgery and RCVS specialist in soft tissue surgery at Willows Referrals.

**What does the study involve?**

We will mainly collect data retrospectively (from the past) from clinical notes, surgical reports and CT imaging records. We may need to contact your own vets for clinical information following your pet’s discharge from [*insert your referral centre name (e.g. Willows)].*

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**What do I need to do?**

You will likely have already given consent for the use of clinical data on your dog for research purposes during the initial consultation prior to treatment. If we need to phone you for more information, you should have already received an email with this document attached and consented to being phoned.

If you do not reply to the initial email, we will assume you are not happy for us to phone you.

You can either reply to the questions at the bottom of the client consent form via email OR confirm you are happy to be phoned. During the phone call, we will ask you a few questions about your dog’s ears following discharge from the hospital.

**How much time will the study take?**

We hope to collect all information over the next 3-6months and may submit the findings of our research for publication in the next 12-18months. All information collected will be deleted after the study is accepted for publication.

**Can I withdraw my dog from this study?**

Inclusion of your dog in this study is voluntary so you are not under any obligation to consent. If you do consent, you can withdraw your dog at any time without affecting your relationship with your vet or [*insert your referral centre name (e.g. Willows)].* You can request for data to be removed from the study at any point up until analysis of the data in December 2023. If you do not want your dog to be included in this study or want to withdraw your dog, please email [*insert your referral centre lead researcher’s email (e.g. research.willows@gmail.com)]*.

**Will anyone else know the results?**

All data collected and results obtained will be completely confidential. Your dog will be given a unique number which only I (the researcher at each referral centre) will be able to link to your dog. The findings of the research may be submitted for publication but participants in the study will remain anonymous.

**Will the study benefit my dog?**

Although this study may not affect your dog specifically, it will help us to improve surgical techniques to reduce the risk of dogs developing para-aural abscesses following TECA surgery. It will also provide guidance on diagnosis and treatments options for this condition.

**Can I tell other people about the study?**

Yes

**Will I be able to know the results of the study?**

Yes. Publication can take up to 6-12months. A summary of the paper will be published online for free access.

**What if I require further information?**

If you have any questions after reading this information sheet please contact:

* Moira Watkins at [research.willows@gmail.com](mailto:moirawatkins.vet@gmail.com)

We are very sorry if your pet has passed away prior to receiving this request for participation in our project. Our hope is that by including as many patients as possible, enough information will be collected to direct future treatment recommendations in other cases.