



Evaluating a New Treatment for Dogs with Kidney Disease

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An estimated 300,000 to 1 million of the 70 million pet dogs in the United States suffer from chronic kidney disease (CKD). Abnormally high protein levels in the urine, known as proteinuria, is a known risk factor for the development of uremic crisis and death. The current standard of care for CKD and proteinuria includes diet change and medications to slow progression of the disease. In addition, drugs known as angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors (ACEi) are widely prescribed by veterinarians to decrease urine protein levels in dogs. Although these medications are effective in many patients, others respond inconsistently or not at all to ACEi, highlighting the need for additional therapies.

In a carefully controlled clinical trial of client-owned dogs with CKD, Morris Animal Foundation-funded researchers from the University of Georgia are evaluating the drug telmisartan and its ability to reduce proteinuria in dogs with CKD. Patients are randomly assigned to receive either telmisartan or the commonly recommended ACEi drug enalapril over a four-month period. Researchers will measure urine protein levels to gauge the effectiveness of both treatments.

Recruitment and enrollment of candidate dogs is ongoing. Over the next year, researchers will continue to focus on case recruitment, screening dogs for study inclusion, and enrolling candidates to reach their goal of 54 dogs. To date, a total of 13 dogs have been included in the study. Ten have successfully completed the four-month study period, and the remainder are actively enrolled.

Since this is a blinded study, researchers will not have results to share until the study is complete. However, data collected should provide strong scientific evidence for or against the effectiveness of telmisartan, compared to enalapril, for the reduction of proteinuria. Identification of an agent that safely and effectively reduces proteinuria in dogs with CKD will greatly improve the lives of thousands of dogs suffering from this condition.