

PROGRESS REPORT



Understanding the Relationship between Intestinal Bacteria and Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)

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Morris Animal Foundation-funded researchers at the University of Melbourne, Australia, are investigating a novel way to diagnose and treat canine inflammatory bowel disease. The team is studying if specific gut bacteria can drive or exacerbate intestinal inflammation in dogs with IBD. They hope what they learn will inform continuing studies on how the gut microbiome may be manipulated for novel treatments as well as inform the development of new diagnostics.

So far, 16 dogs are enrolled in the study, a few through study completion; the enrollment goal is 20 dogs. Researchers are collecting stool samples for analysis during standard-of-care treatment until their canine patients gain remission. They specifically are looking at bacteria known to interact directly with the gut immune system and tracking changes in bacterial makeup from diagnosis through recovery.

IBD is a common disease in dogs, causing vomiting, diarrhea and weight loss. The team hopes findings from this study will lead to a different way of assessing the gut microbiome, and possibly new ways of targeting and fixing the microbiome through personalized medicine – tailoring treatment needs for individual dogs with IBD. This new information also may lead to new ways to assess the gut health of dogs via noninvasive testing of gut bacteria in stool samples, reducing the need to directly biopsy the intestine to establish a definitive diagnosis for IBD.

Thank you for your generous support of this study!