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EDITOR'S LETTER

Small Differences Matter

In this issue, we feature articles on 2 diseases that are debilitating in dogs, but from a feline perspective: degenerative joint disease and osteoarthritis (DJD/OA) and heartworm disease. We are now aware that up to 61% of all cats over the age of 6 years have radiographic evidence of DJD/OA in at least 1 joint.¹ Despite work showing that nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs are effective for DJD/OA pain and can be used safely in many cats, their mechanism of action can be associated with adverse effects. Additionally, daily oral administration of drugs to cats can be complicated. So, who wouldn't want to treat this disease with a long-acting safe injectable? This issue's **Practical Pharmacology** article (p. 20) discusses this new therapeutic option for cats that has proven to be significantly effective for the disease, though its long-term safety remains to be seen. We also know that the prevalence of heartworms in cats is estimated to be 5- to 20-fold lower than in dogs.² However, cats are much less immunologically tolerant of heartworm infections and manifest clinical signs different from dogs. Therefore, clinical suspicion of the disease and its diagnosis becomes a greater challenge. This issue's **Parasitology** article (p. 26) discusses the latest information on the risk for and diagnosis of this disease in cats, emphasizing just how important it is to be aware of the small differences between these 2 species when looking at the same diseases.

WHAT WE'RE READING

In each issue, a member of our Editorial Advisory Board will share a recent open access publication of interest.

Comparison between clinical evaluations and laboratory findings and the impact of biofilm on antimicrobial susceptibility in vitro in canine otitis externa

Luciani L, Stefanetti V, Rampacci E, et al.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/vde.13197>

WHAT WAS INVESTIGATED? This study investigates the association between clinical, cytological, and bacteriological findings with the presence of biofilm in vivo through environmental scanning electron microscope (ESEM) examination of 72 ear sample swabs from 56 dogs with otitis externa (OE).

WHAT WAS FOUND?

- A correlation ($p < 0.01$) between clinical and cytological biofilm evaluation was observed.
- *Staphylococcus pseudintermedius* (48.8%) and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (30.2%) were the most frequently isolated species.
- Ear wax, biofilm, and pus reacted with a different pathway, allowing differentiation of these components by ESEM.

- There was no statistical association between in vivo ESEM biofilm observation and clinical ($p = 0.625$) and cytological ($p = 0.455$) biofilm evaluation.

TAKE-HOME POINTS

- This is the first report demonstrating ESEM as a useful tool to evaluate biofilm presence from clinical ear samples on OE.
- The clinical and cytological evaluations of biofilm on OE may not correlate to the biofilm presence evaluated utilizing ESEM.
- In the majority of cases, cytological evaluation of biofilm correlated to the ESEM findings; however, 7 OE cytology-positive biofilm samples were negative on ESEM.

— Frane Banovic, DVM, PhD, DECVN