

## The health of the Dalmatian in the Netherlands and in Norway

The European Cooperation of Dalmatian Clubs decided in 1997 to send a questionnaire to the Dalmatian breed clubs regarding the health of their dogs. Not all the member clubs participated and only two countries reported sufficient answers to be considered statistically reliable. Of the 982 registered dogs which theoretically could have been included in the survey, the Dutch and the Norwegian clubs received answers on 324 dogs (33%), 145 males and 179 females. The dogs were 2-6 years old. In the Netherlands the data were collected and treated by dr. C. Wolschrijn. In Norway the data were collected and treated by dr. T. Greibrokk, in 1999-2000.

The main results from the combined data were:

<b>Skin and hair</b>	No. of dogs	%
parasite and fungus infections	14	4.3
atopic allergy	11	3.3
nutrition allergy	29	9.0
other problems occurring more than once (including folliculitis, superficial pyoderma etc.)	57	17.6
<b>Eyes</b>		
Entropion and ectropion	0	0
Running eyes and others	21	6.5
<b>Limbs</b>		
Osteochondrosis	3	0.9
<b>Ears</b>		
Earmite and bacterial infection, more than once	60	18.5
<b>Heart</b>		
Damaged heart valve, heart murmur	5	1.5

<b>Lungs</b>		
Kennel cough etc.	16	4.9
<b>Digestive system</b>		
Stomach torsion	2	0.6
Bacterial infections in stomach and intestines	15	4.6
Viral infections in stomach and intestines	7	2.2
Parasite infections	1	0.3
Foreign objects	11	3.3
<b>Urinary tract</b>		
kidney failure	3	0.9
bladder/urine stones	7	2.2
infections in bladder and urethra	14	4.3
<b>Reproductive system</b>		
inflammation of milk glands, uterus, pseudogravidity	24	13.4
endometritis	4	2.2
sterilized females	39	21.8
inflammation of testis, prostate and penis	25	17.2
castrated males	31	21.4
<b>Nerve system</b>		
Epilepsy	1	0.2

Note that the numbers are not necessarily additive in each category. For example, several of the dogs with urinary stones were naturally also reported with bladder infections. And, the numbers with skin problems cannot necessarily be added up and cannot be added to the numbers with ear infections, since they were often the same dogs.

Significant differences between dogs from the two countries were noticed mainly on sterilized bitches and castrated dogs, where the numbers were much higher in the Dutch population, probably reflecting the much higher population density in the Netherlands, compared to Norway.

## **Conclusions**

Traditionally the Dalmatian has been known for two inherited problems, deafness and urinary stones. From other studies the rate of bilateral deafness in the two countries is known to be about 4%. From this report it appears that the prevalence of urinary stones is at approximately the same level or lower, and thus not a major problem. There appears to be no significant problems with the reproductive system (mostly minor things), the digestive system, nerve system, hormones, heart and vascular system, lungs and eyes. From other studies hip dysplasia is known to affect less than 10-15% of the Dalmatians in Norway, which is satisfactory for the larger breeds. The most prevalent problem, according to the data above, is skin and hair problems and ear infections, which often is related to deficiencies of the immunosystem. This probably comes as no surprise to the breeders, and the numbers are also at the same level as for most other breeds.