

**Ticks transmit Rocky Mountain spotted fever in just minutes, study finds (Healio (free registration)/Infectious Disease News) 9/30**

New research demonstrated that there was a difference in the time it took ticks to transmit Rocky Mountain spotted fever to a host depending on whether they had recently fed or not. Ticks (*Amblyomma aureolatum* – a South American tick), which were infected with Rocky Mountain spotted fever that had recently fed on one host and then were placed on another host to continue feeding, transmitted the disease to the new host within 10 minutes of feeding. Infected ticks that had not recently fed took more than 10 hours to transmit the disease. This study showed the importance of keeping dogs tick-free in areas endemic with Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

*Comment: This would be an interesting study to repeat with other tick-borne diseases, such as Lyme disease, to see if this holds true for them as well. SEM*

**Can this music device calm anxious dogs? (Mashable) 10/20**

The iCalmDog, dubbed the “iPod for dogs”, is being marketed as a device that can calm anxious dogs or invigorate aging dogs. Designed by a concert pianist and a psychoacoustic engineer, the pair conducted studies for 11 years before bringing their product to market. They found tone, tempo and pattern needed to be altered for dogs. Dogs can hear higher frequencies than humans, so the tone needs to accommodate their broader range. Slower tempos are used to calm animals while tempos are sped up to keep elderly dogs minds active. Patterns were also simplified to make it easier for dogs to process. Based on previous research which showed dogs responded best to classical music, the iCalmDog is designed with classical music. The iCalmDog is available through the group’s website, Through A Dog’s Ear.

*Comment: Another option besides drugs to help those dogs that suffer from separation anxiety as well as to help our aging dogs keep mentally active. SEM*

**Can rapamycin extend the canine life span? (Seattle Times, The) 11/3**

University of Washington researchers are investigating rapamycin, a drug used to prevent organ rejection, to determine whether it can improve the health and longevity of dogs – and potentially humans. Numerous laboratory studies, using yeast, fruit flies, worms, and mice, have shown that the drug can delay onset of some diseases and degenerative processes and restore vigor to elderly animals as well as extend life span. Rapamycin functions by slowing cell growth, and seems to also have an anti-inflammatory effect as well – which in mice studies caused marked improvement in heart function. The investigators hope to see if the drug will work the same in dogs.

*Comment: Another study looking for the “fountain of youth” drug. We all want to see our canine companions live a longer and healthier life and this drug may have some merit – more studies will tell. One thing is certain with this drug though and that is that “more will not be better” for higher*

*dosages are associated with serious side effects such as the risk of diabetes as well as poor wound healing. SEM*

**Could this harness alleviate hip dysplasia? (Wired.com) 11/10**

A prototype harness, named the Hipster, designed by an Israeli industrial designer in collaboration with a veterinarian, hopes to help dogs affected with hip dysplasia. Dogs with hip dysplasia tend to have hind leg muscle degeneration due to the dog relying more on their front legs for strength. Fitting around the dog's chest and stomach and wrapping both legs like a cast, the harness - when pulled tight - requires the dog to use its hind legs more thus strengthening them and keeping the femur in the correct position. The hope is that with the use of the harness recovery could be hastened to as little as month. Still in the design and testing phase, the Hipster is not currently available on the market.

*Comment: While the developer is looking to use this harness for rehabbing older dogs that are experiencing the effects of hip dysplasia, I wonder if down the road this harness might be able to be used on puppies and young dogs diagnosed with hip dysplasia at an early age to help the hip joint develop into a more normal joint. Human infants are screened early on for signs of hip dysplasia and placed in a special brace to help keep the femoral head seated properly in the joint so that the hip joint can develop correctly. If this harness could have the same effect on developing canine hips it would save much pain and suffering later and would definitely be less invasive and expensive than corrective orthopedic surgeries. SEM*

**Finesse vs. force: How cats and dogs drink (Discovery) 11/24**

Dogs are inherently messier drinkers than cats a recent study shows – and big dogs are messier than smaller dogs. While a cat gently places its tongue on the water's surface and then rapidly lifts it thus creating a water column underneath which the cat then catches and drinks with hardly a splash, dogs – with their ladle like tongue tips – smash the water's surface with the tip which creates lots of splashing. Dogs, versus cats, also need to open their mouths further to take in the water-laden tongue making for more splashing. The amount of water a dog's tongue can move increases exponentially with the dog's body size.

*Comment: More fun facts that add more fodder to the dog person versus cat person "feud". SEM*