Improving diagnosis and treatment of canine neuropathic pain

We are recruiting dogs with Chiari-like malformation/syringomyelia (CM/SM) that present clinical signs. The project will examine some aspects of pain assessment and treatment with pregabalin, agent which is hoped will provide improved relief from the pain associated with this condition. Confirmation by MRI will be necessary to include your dog in the study.

Here is little information for you:

What will happen during the study?
Firstly, your dog will be prescribed a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug and will need to take this treatment once daily for between seven and fourteen days. Your dog will receive basic pain medication with carprofen or other anti-inflammatory drug during the whole duration of the study.

Your dog will be enrolled in the study for approximately 4 weeks, and we will need to meet on 3 occasions during this period at approximately 2-week interval. Your dog will be hospitalised for 24 hours each occasion.

At day 0, day 14 and day 28, your dog will visit us and we will assess the following:

- We will perform physical and neurological examination.
- You will be asked to complete a questionnaire about your dog to try to identify clinical signs and behavioural disturbances potentially associated with neuropathic pain.
- We will test thermal and pressure thresholds in affected and unaffected areas on your dog. Clipping of small skin areas may be necessary to do this. Your dog will be free to move away from the test, and no tissue damage will be made (this type of devices are used also in humans!).

Dogs enrolled onto this study will receive on day 0 a 2 week treatment with pregabalin (A) or placebo (B) in a randomised order. After 2 weeks treatment we will change treatment from A to B and vice versa. A placebo is a product which looks like the investigational product, but contains no active ingredient. You and the Investigator will not know which treatment your dog is receiving; this is known as a “masked” study. This helps the accuracy of the drug evaluation. You dog will still receive basic pain medication with your usual analgesic (carprofen or meloxicam) regardless of whether they are taking the new drug or the placebo.

On day 0, 14 and 28, your dog will stay in the hospital for a day to participate in the pharmacological study, we will collect a minimum of 3 blood samples and a maximum of 6 blood samples (optional) at different time points. As much as possible, the samples will be taken from a catheter, thus avoiding the number of venepuncture. We will measure concentration of the treatment drug, to measure possible markers of neuropathic pain and
response to treatment. Just the necessary amount will be taken without compromising the health of your dog.

If you choose to enrol your dog on this study, the normal neurological care at the Queen Mother Hospital for Animals will be adhered to and your dog will receive the usual excellent standard of care associated with this hospital.

*Anonymity and confidentiality:*

All information collected about you and your dog in anonymous and confidential, including video material and will be used just for the experiment. Your contact details (used to arrange this session and contact you while your dog is being tested at home) are kept securely and will be destroyed after use.

If you are interested in participating in our study, please sign the enclosed consent form. If would like to find out more before signing please contact:

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The study is approved by the RVC Ethics and Welfare Committee; reference no URN 2013 1243 and appropriate government regulatory bodies. It will be carried out appropriately to ensure the welfare of your pet while on the study and the accuracy of the trial. No charge will be made for treatment or procedures during this study (hospitalisation and sample collection). You will have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.