

What is dystocia?

Difficult birth (known as dystocia) occurs when the dam has trouble delivering the puppies. This may put both the dam and pups at risk. Understanding those dogs at greater risk can help owners be aware of potential problems and seek veterinary advice early .

The study

This study included 701 dystocia cases from 18,758 bitches attending 50 Vets Now emergency veterinary clinics in the UK. Some breeds showed much higher risk of dystocia.



Which breeds are at most risk?

Compared with crossbreeds: After accounting for other factors such as age, French Bulldogs are 16 times, Boston Terriers are 13 times, Pugs 11 times and Chihuahuas 10 times more likely to show dystocia.

Are there any other risk factors?

Older bitches are at greatest risk. Bitches aged 3.0 to 5.9 years were 3 times more likely to show dystocia than bitches under 3 years.

Conclusion

Owners of high-risk breeds should seek veterinary advice before considering breeding their bitch.

O'Neill, D.G., et al. (2017) 'Canine dystocia in 50 UK first-opinion emergency-care veterinary practices: prevalence and risk factors', *Veterinary Record*, 181(4), available: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/vr.104108> (Not Open Access)