VetCompass Clinical Grading Tool for Heat-Related Illness (HRI) in Dogs

STUDY SUMMARY
This study used clinical information from real cases of HRI in dogs in the UK. A clinical grading tool was developed that can assist veterinary professionals in diagnosing and managing patients with HRI. More than 70% of HRI cases treated at veterinary practices in the UK happen after exercise, often in hot weather.

Clinical signs include:

- Panting
- Difficulty breathing
- Tiredness
- Change to behaviour
- Less keen to play

These dogs need immediate veterinary care to prevent progression to the most severe form.

Heat related illness is a progressive disorder. The more severe the dog’s clinical condition becomes, the less likely it is the dog will survive. This clinical grading tool can help owners and veterinary professionals to spot the signs of HRI earlier when it is still at the mild grade. This means that earlier action can be taken to improve the dog’s chances of survival.

CLICK TO READ FULL STUDY
Hall et al. (2021) “Proposing the VetCompass Clinical Grading Tool for Heat-Related Illness in Dogs,” Scientific Reports.

RVC VetCompass (https://www.rvc.ac.uk/vetcompass) carries out welfare research based on anonymised clinical information shared from over 30% of UK veterinary practices. We are very grateful to the owners and veterinary professionals who contribute to VetCompass research.