The average bodyweight of Shar Pei dogs was:
Male 23.5kg
Female 20.8kg

The most common disorder of Shar Pei dogs was entropion (in-turned eyelids) which was diagnosed in one in five of all Shar Pei dogs each year. This painful extreme conformation is linked to the hereditary disease of hyaluronosis which largely defines the breed with their characteristic loose, thickened and folded skin.

Anybody considering acquiring a dog should prioritise the welfare of the dog over our human desires to own animals with extreme conformations. This welfare message aligns with national messaging from most UK stakeholders in canine welfare.

Many of the common disorders of Shar Pei result from their extreme conformation of skin thickening and folding. Urgent action is needed to reform the breed to protect the welfare of these dogs and to ensure breeders and owners are meeting their legal, ethical, moral and social responsibilities.

The Shar Pei dog breed is instantly recognisable due to their distinctive loose, thickened and folded skin that results from a genetic mutation. ‘Shar Pei’ translates from the Chinese for ‘sandpaper skin’. Their abnormal skin is an extreme conformation that has been linked to severe health problems, including eyelid and ear issues.

Extreme conformation in dogs refers to a physical appearance that has been so significantly altered by mankind away from the natural canine state that affected dogs often suffer from poor health and welfare.

This study aimed to describe the demographic information, common disorders and longevity of Shar Pei dogs in the UK. The study used information from anonymous veterinary clinical records in the VetCompass Programme.

Most commonly diagnosed disorders*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disorder</th>
<th>Prevalence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Entropion (in-turned eyelids)</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Otitis externa (inflamed ear canal)</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ear disorder</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Aggression</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pyoderma (fur infections)</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average age at death in Shar Pei was 7.3 years. This is substantially shorter than the 11.2 years longevity reported for dogs overall in the UK.*

The most common causes of death in Shar Pei were cancer (15.4%), kidney disorders (13.2%) and behavioural disorders (11.0%).

Shar Pei dogs comprised 0.42% of dogs in the UK (one in every 250 dogs).

The average longevity of Shar Pei dogs in the study was 7.3 years.

*The most common disorder of Shar Pei dogs included 5.7% pyoderma, 5.2% aggression, 2.8% ophthalmia, 2.7% osteoarthritis, 2.6% pododermatitis and 2.5% atopy.

The most common causes of death in Shar Pei were cancer (15.4%), kidney disorders (13.2%) and behavioural disorders (11.0%).

CONCLUSIONS

Anybody considering acquiring a dog should prioritise the welfare of the dog over our human desires to own animals with extreme conformations. This welfare message aligns with national messaging from most UK stakeholders in canine welfare.

The most common disorder of Shar Pei dogs was entropion (17.9%). This painful extreme conformation is linked to severe health problems, including eyelid and ear issues.

Many of the common disorders of Shar Pei result from their extreme conformation of skin thickening and folding. Urgent action is needed to reform the breed to protect the welfare of these dogs and to ensure breeders and owners are meeting their legal, ethical, moral and social responsibilities.

*The average longevity of Shar Pei dogs in the study was 7.3 years.

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.

O’Neill et al. (2023) “Is it now time to iron out the wrinkles? Health of Shar Pei dogs under primary veterinary care in the UK” Canine Medicine and Genetics

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The average longevity of Shar Pei dogs in the study was 7.3 years.

Shar Pei dogs died during the study period
190/1,913 (9.9%)

The most common causes of death in Shar Pei were cancer (15.4%), kidney disorders (13.2%) and behavioural disorders (11.0%).

*Percentage of Shar Pei dogs diagnosed in 2013

The average age at death in Shar Pei was 7.3 years. This is substantially shorter than the 11.2 years longevity reported for dogs overall in the UK.*