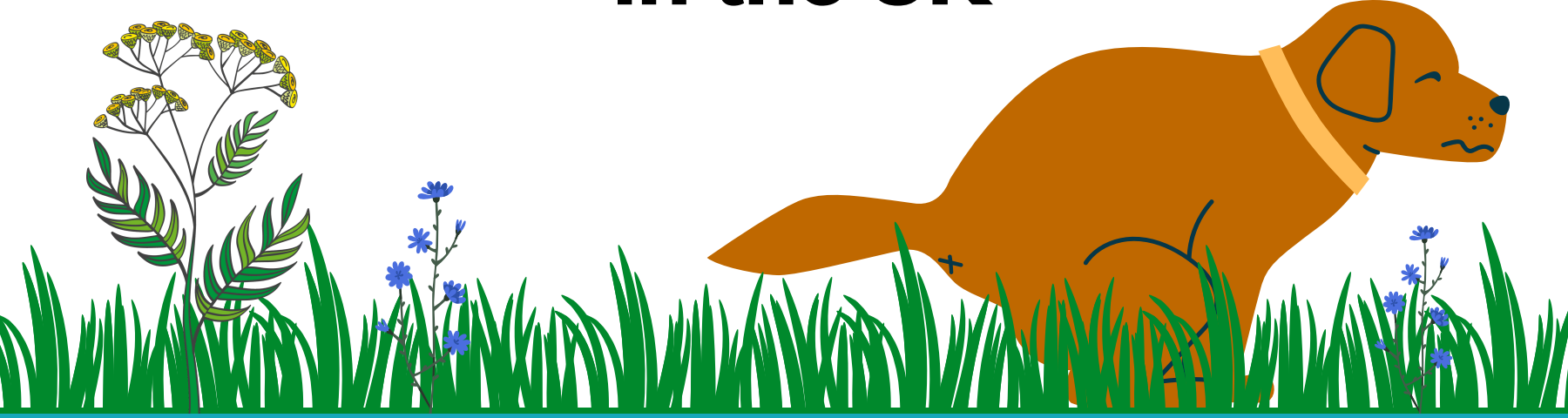


Acute diarrhoea in dogs under primary veterinary care in the UK



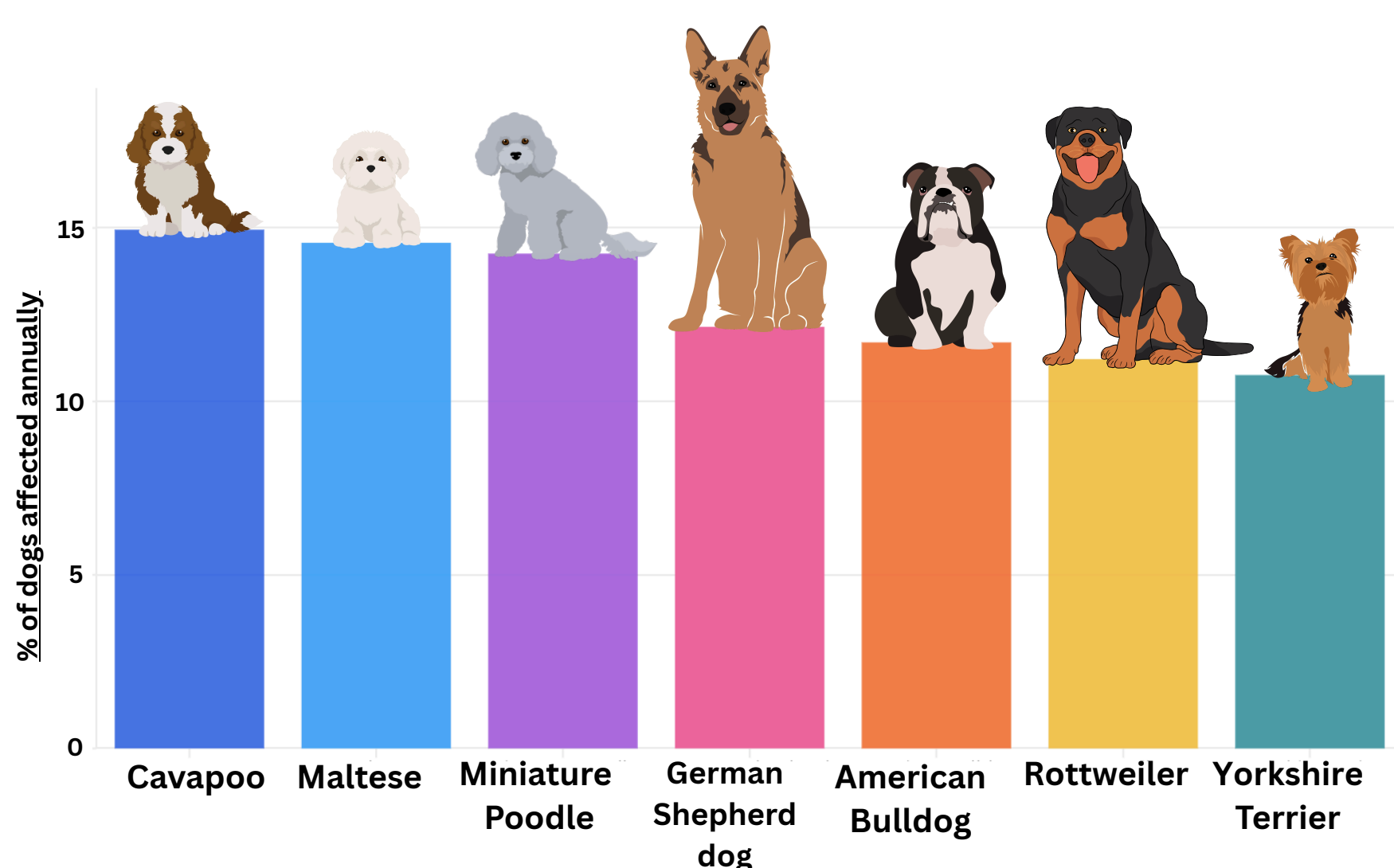
Acute diarrhoea is a common reason for seeking veterinary care for dogs in the UK. The condition can severely affect the welfare of affected dogs and also lead to stress for their owners. This study aimed to report the frequency, risk factors and clinical management for acute diarrhoea diagnosed under primary veterinary care in the UK in 2019.

The overall study included 2,250,417 dogs under primary veterinary care in 2019

Overall, 8.2% (around 1-in-12) dogs are diagnosed with acute diarrhoea each year

19.7% of the cases received two or more veterinary care events related to the acute diarrhoea

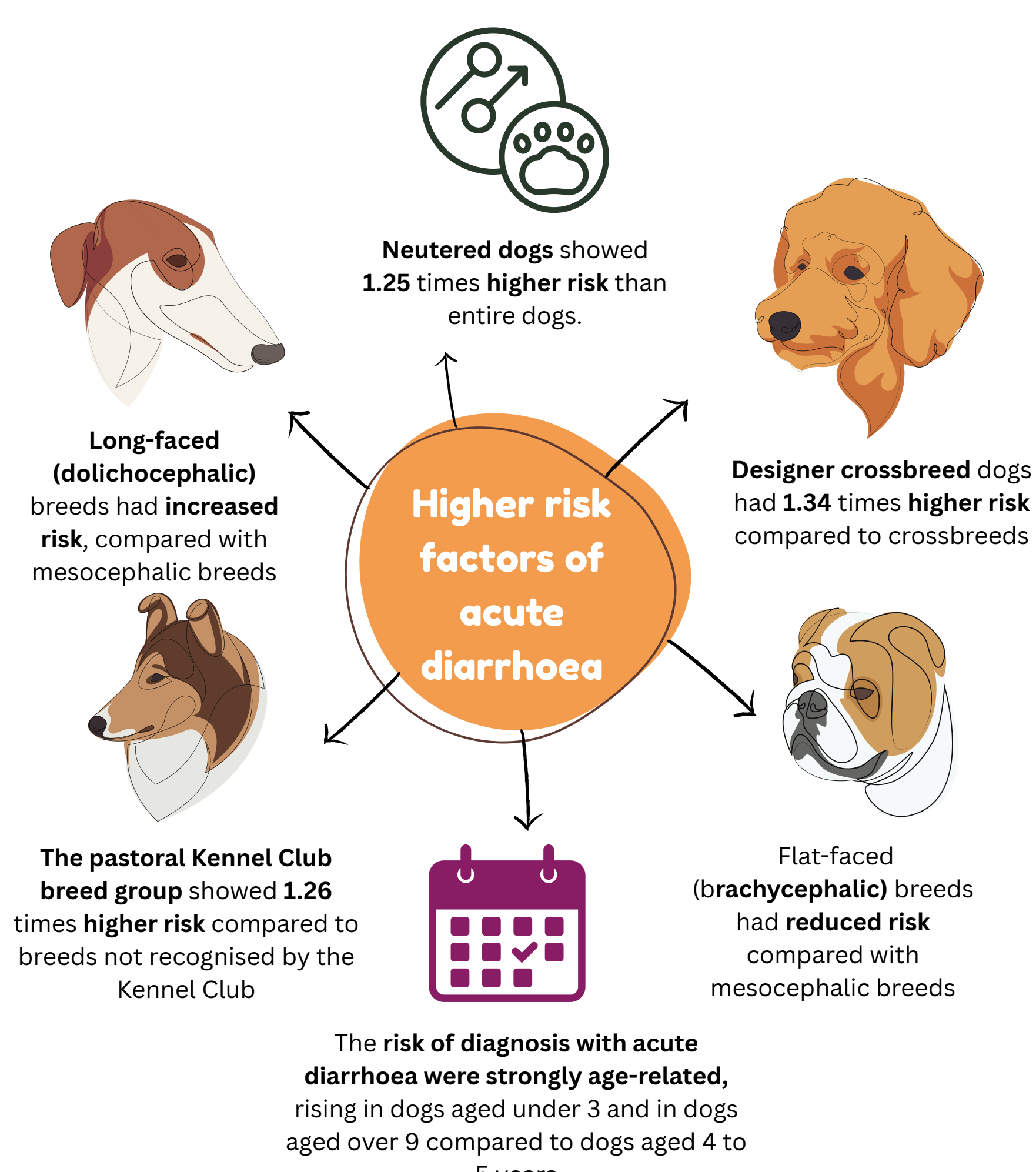
Breeds with highest frequency



The most common veterinary treatment or clinical management for acute diarrhoea cases were **probiotics** (59.6%), **dietary management** (44.0%), **antibiosis** (38.2%) and **maropitant** (24.0%)

The most commonly recorded suspected explanation for the acute diarrhoea were **scavenging/dietary indiscretion** (9.5%), **gastroenteritis** (8.1%), **colitis** (4.6%), **reaction to NSAID therapy** (4.6%) and **dietary change** (4.6%)

Overall, **29.3%** (around 3-in-10) diarrhoea cases showed **blood in the diarrhoea**. The most common other clinical signs recorded along with the diarrhoea were **vomiting** (44.3%), **reduced appetite** (27.7%), **lethargy** (24.2%), **abdominal pain/discomfort** (13.4%), **fever** (8.7%) and **dehydration** (7.8%).



Conclusions

This study confirms that acute diarrhea is a common clinical condition in dogs receiving primary veterinary care, affecting 1 in 12 dogs each year. The identified breed predispositions suggest a genetic component to the condition.

The outcomes following veterinary treatment are generally positive, with over 80% of acute diarrhea cases not requiring a follow-up visit. However, the frequent use of antibiotics raises concerns about unnecessary antibiotic therapy for this condition, despite years of recommendations against it.

O'Neill, D.G., Prisk, L., Brodbelt, D.C., Church, D.B., Allerton, F. (2025) 'Epidemiology and clinical management of acute diarrhoea in dogs under primary veterinary care in the UK'. PLOS ONE

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE FULL STUDY](#)

RVC VetCompass <https://www.rvc.ac.uk/vetcompass> carries out welfare research 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.