

Hypothyroidism is a hormonal disorder in dogs, resulting from a deficiency of thyroid hormones. Dogs with hypothyroidism may show weight gain, lethargy, hair loss, sensitivity to cold temperatures and may display a 'tragic' facial expression. Hypothyroidism is easily managed with oral supplementation of levo-thyroxine so early diagnosis is important to improve the welfare of affected dogs.

This study aimed to investigate the frequency of diagnosis of hypothyroidism and to identify breeds at most risk in the UK. This information can help owners and veterinary teams to spot cases of hypothyroidism earlier and begin treatment sooner.



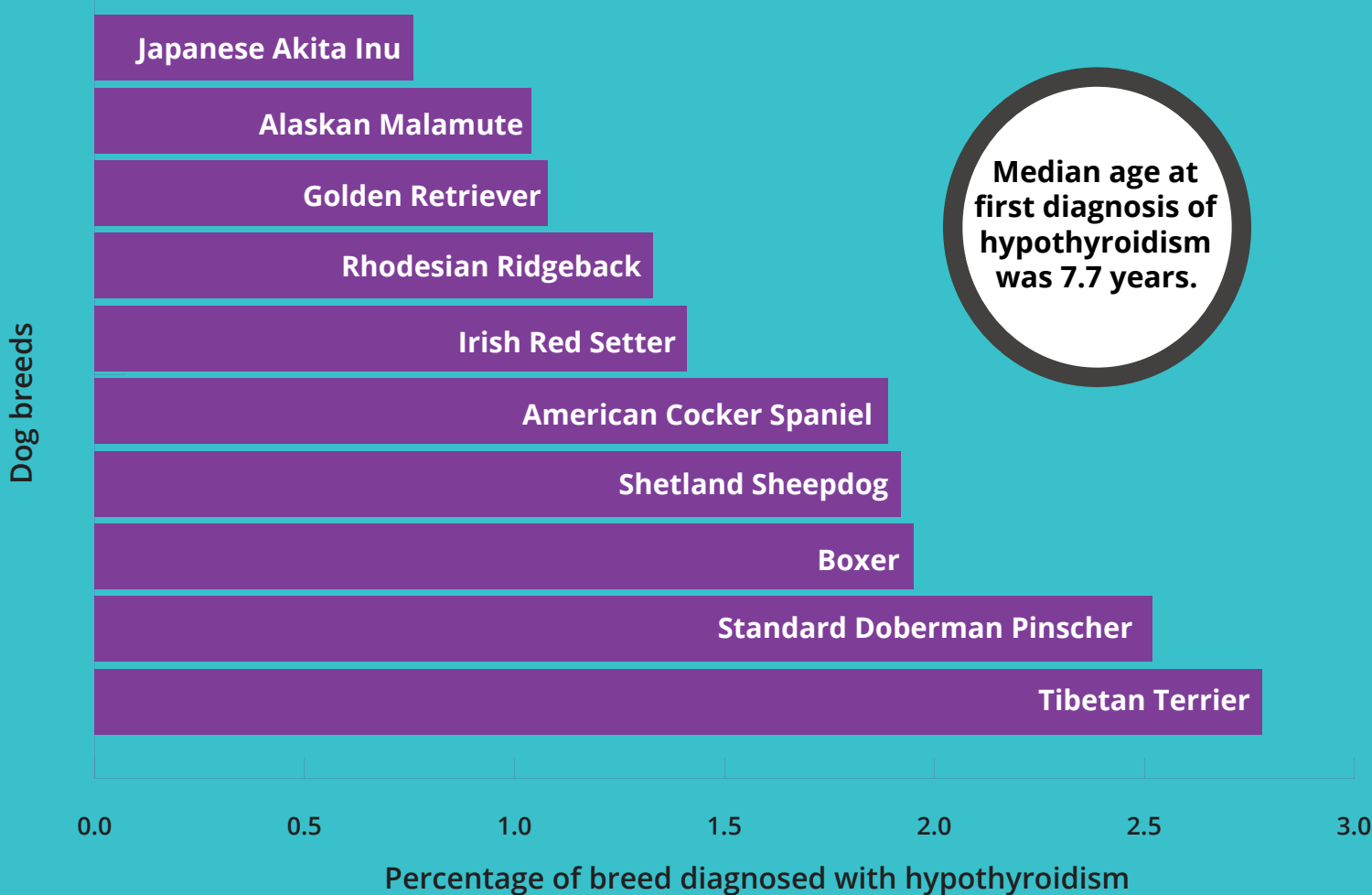
Total number of dogs in the study

905,553

Proportion of UK dogs overall affected with hypothyroidism each year

0.23%
(1 in 400)

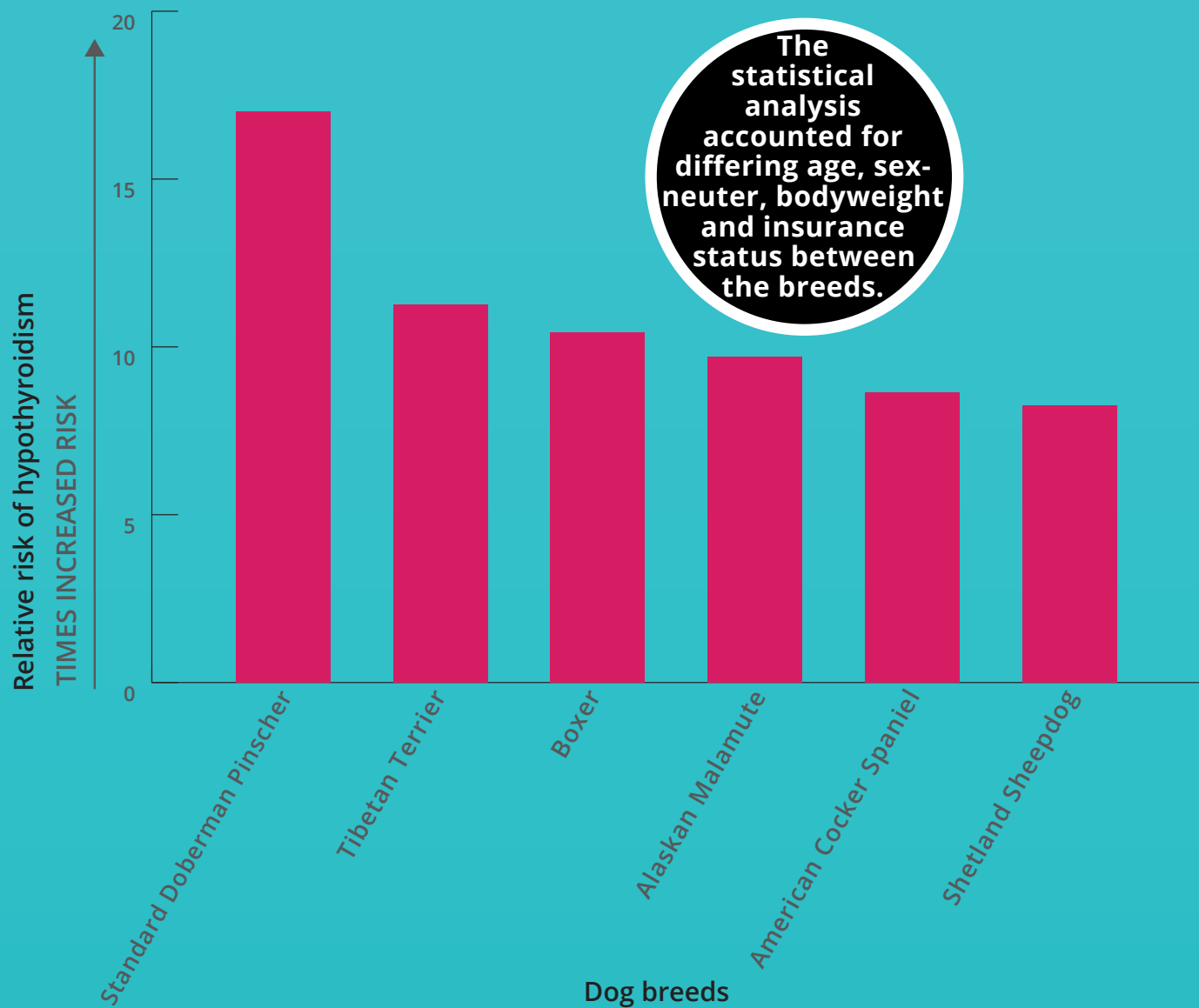
Breeds most commonly affected with hypothyroidism



Median age at first diagnosis of hypothyroidism was 7.7 years.

Breed risk of hypothyroidism

Breeds with the **highest** risk of hypothyroidism compared to crossbred dogs overall



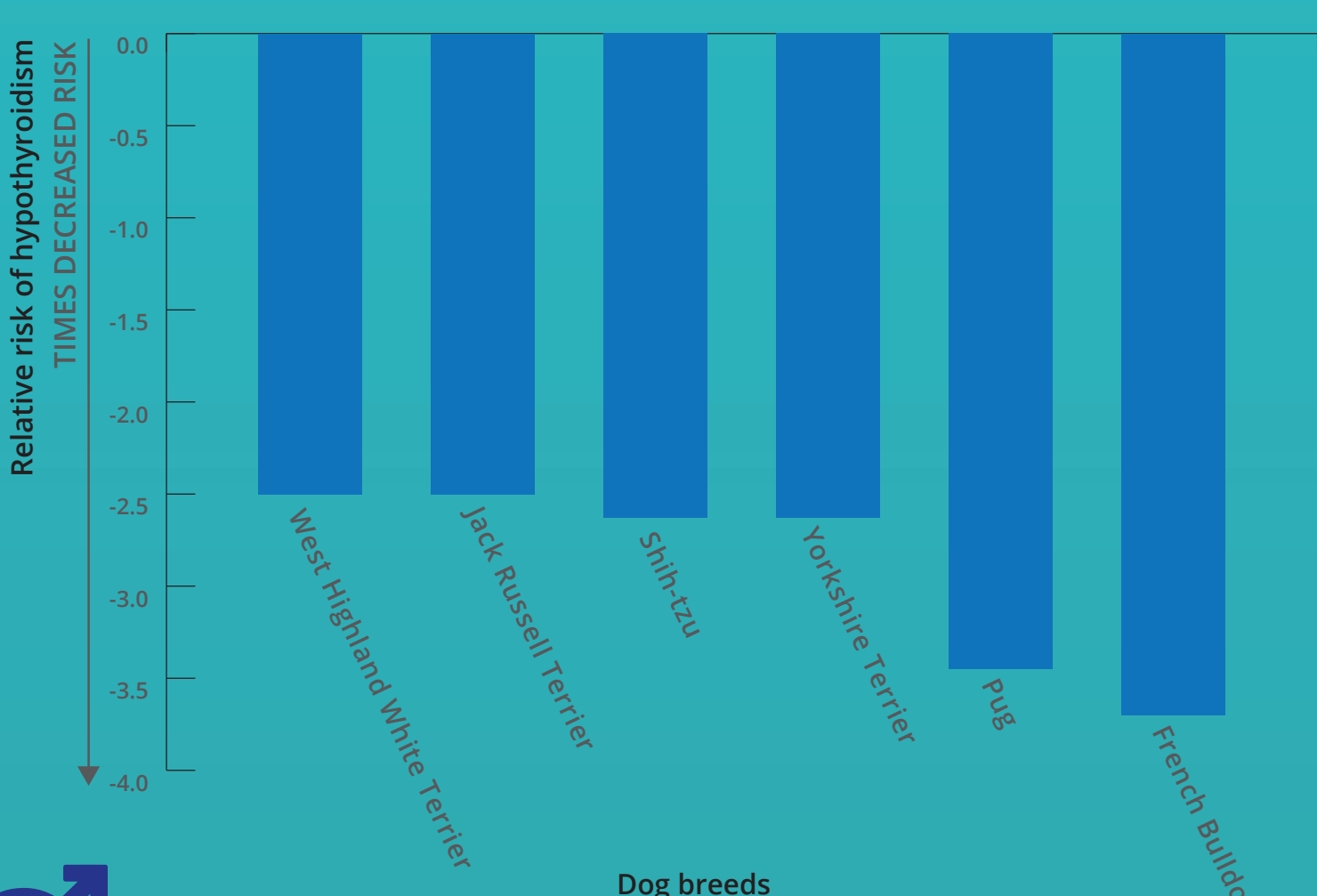
The statistical analysis accounted for differing age, sex, neuter, bodyweight and insurance status between the breeds.

The risk of hypothyroidism increased with rising bodyweight.

Insured animals had 2.27 times the risk of a diagnosis of hypothyroidism compared with uninsured.

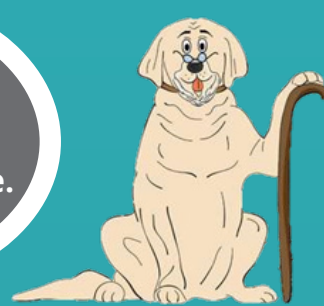
Purebred dogs had 1.49 times increased risk of hypothyroidism compared with crossbred dogs.

Breeds with the **lowest** risk of hypothyroidism compared to crossbred dogs overall



Neutered male (x 1.31) and female dogs (x 1.46) had increased risk of hypothyroidism compared to entire female dogs.

Risk of having hypothyroidism increased with age.



CONCLUSIONS:

The risk of hypothyroidism increased with age. Hypothyroidism is a life-long, but rarely life-limiting condition that can be easily managed with oral treatment.

These results can help UK dog owners and veterinary professionals to spot cases of hypothyroidism earlier and start treatment sooner to protect the welfare of affected dogs.

[CLICK TO READ THE FULL STUDY](#)

O'Neill et al. (2022) "Frequency, breed predispositions and other demographic risk factors for diagnosis of hypothyroidism in dogs under primary veterinary care in the UK", Canine Medicine and Genetics, Volume 9, Article 11

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.