Mammary tumours in female cats

Older age and purebred status were significantly associated with mammary tumour diagnosis.

This study aimed to report the clinical signs and estimate the incidence and risk factors for mammary tumours in the wider population of female cats attending primary care practices in the UK. The study included 259,869 female cats under veterinary care in 2016.

0.1% (270 cases from 259,869 cats)

Proportion of cats with mammary tumour diagnosed in 2016

19.3% (52/270)

Proportion of diagnoses that included histopathology

12 years (interquartile range: 8.5-14.0)

Average age at diagnosis for mammary tumours

Clinical signs of mammary tumours

Cats generally presented with multiple clinical signs.

The 5 most common clinical signs of mammary tumours in female cats were:

- Ulceration in the mammary region (18%)
- Weight loss (17%)
- Hard mass (16%)
- Loss of appetite (10%)
- Discharge from the mammary region (7%)

Risk factors for mammary tumour diagnosis

- Age (compared to cats 5 to <8 years)
- Breed (compared to crossbred cats)

The average survival time after mammary tumour diagnosis was 18.7 months.

Conclusions

- Survival after diagnosis was longer than previously reported and may reflect the reality of primary-care cancer compared to referral centre and insurance based studies.
- The study can help veterinary surgeons identify cats at greater risk of mammary tumour and advise on survival after diagnosis.
- Older age and purebred status were significantly associated with mammary tumour diagnosis.