

Mammary tumours are the most common type of cancer in female dogs (bitches). Previous research has reported that approximately half of mammary tumors are malignant (can spread to other parts of the body), highlighting the potentially severe negative impact of the condition. However, few studies have investigated the frequency of mammary tumours in bitches under primary veterinary care.

This study aimed to estimate the incidence and risk factors for mammary tumours in the wider population of bitches attending primary care practices in the UK in 2016.



Proportion of bitches newly diagnosed with mammary tumours per year

1.34%
(1,340.7/100,000 per year)

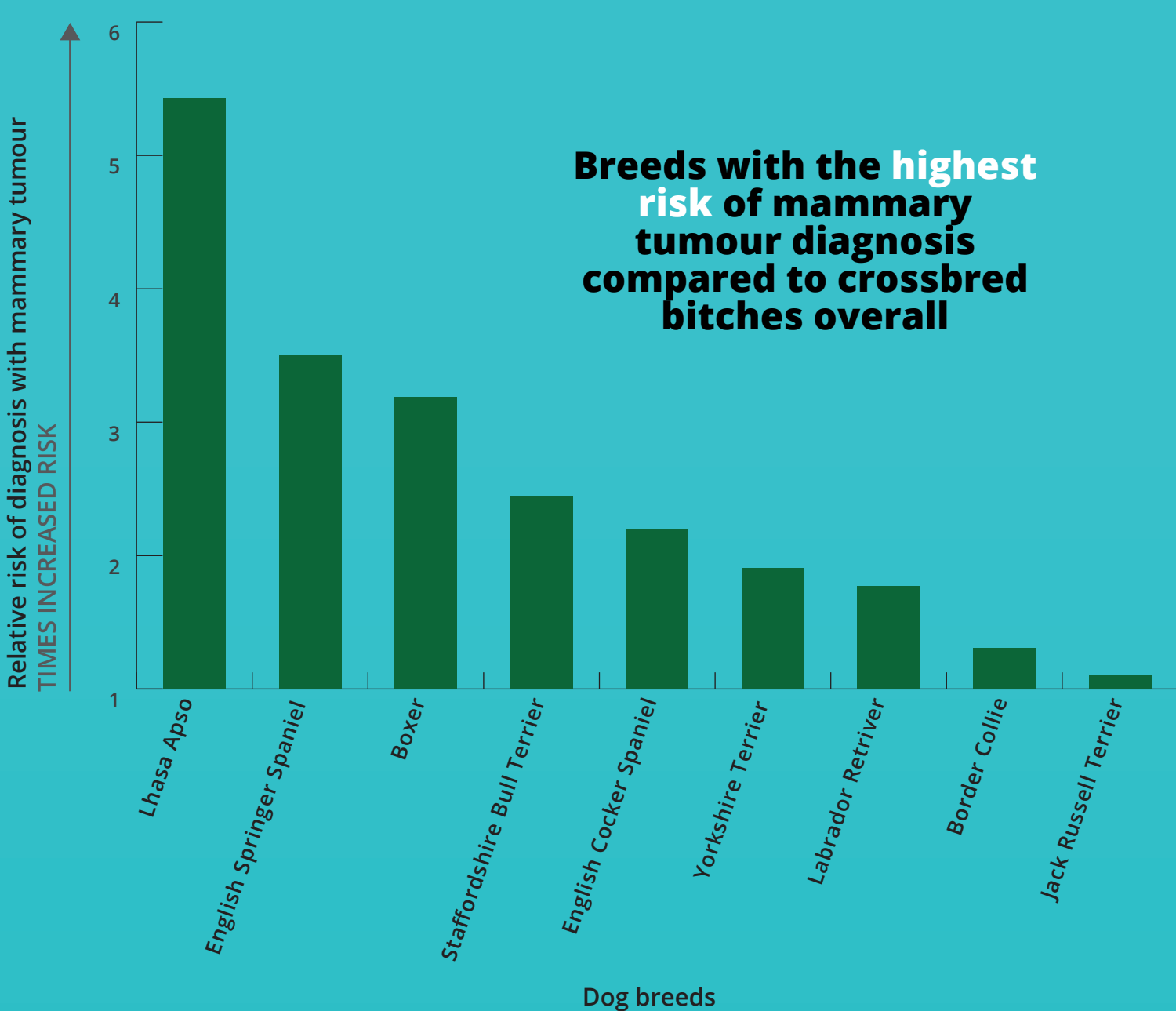
Proportion of diagnoses that included histopathology (laboratory testing)

22.5%
(51/335 cases)

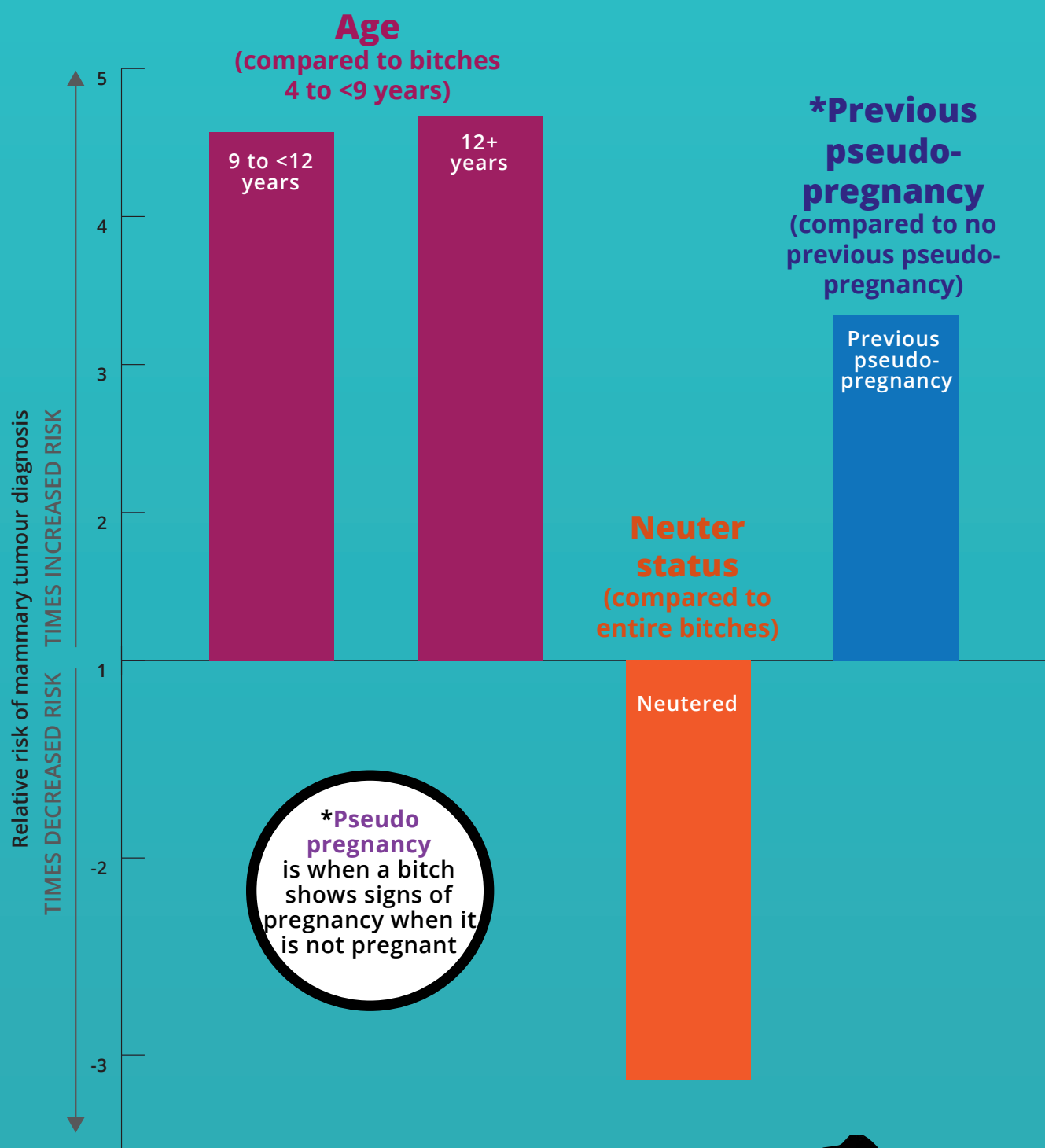
Average age at diagnosis for mammary tumours

10.0 years
(interquartile range: 8.0-11.0)

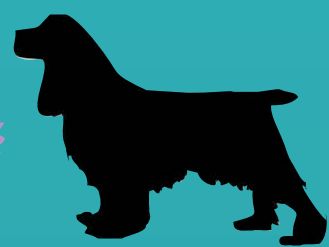
Breeds at risk of mammary tumours



Other risk factors for mammary tumours



Seventy seven cases (34%) underwent surgery to remove the tumour, 57 (25%) of which had local resection while 20 (9%) had either a complete bilateral mastectomy or unilateral mammary strip removal.



Conclusions

Certain breeds including the Springer and Cocker Spaniels have an increased risk of a tumour in agreement with previous research.

Intact and older bitches were identified to have a strong association with the diagnosis of mammary tumour.

These findings can help guide veterinarians in primary care practice when advising their clients of the risks of mammary tumour.

[CLICK TO READ THE FULL STUDY](#)

Varney, D. et al. (2023) "The epidemiology of mammary tumours in bitches under veterinary care in the UK in 2016"

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.