Feline Retroviruses: Seroprevalence & Risk Factors

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Epidemiologic studies attempt to determine the importance of infection and associated disease (ie, prevalence) and to identify cause and effect patterns of infection (ie, risk factors) in a defined population so that preventive healthcare guidelines can be devised. Since feline leukemia virus (FeLV) was discovered in 1964 and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) in 1986, many epidemiologic studies regarding these retroviruses have been published. The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) published feline retrovirus management guidelines in 2008 and is expected to update these guidelines by 2018 (Little SE, personal communication). This study sought to update seroprevalence information and to identify risk factors associated with seropositivity for FeLV antigen and anti-FIV antibody in cats in the United States and Canada.

In the Literature
... TO YOUR PATIENTS

Key pearls to put into practice:

1. Compliance with AAFP guidelines should be improved for feline retroviral testing and management.

2. Veterinarian and cat owner education and awareness of feline retrovirus seroprevalence and importance of preventive medicine should be improved.

3. The paradigm of FeLV as a “friendly cat” disease should be shifted. FeLV can be transmitted through cat bite wounds as well as through prolonged exposure to infected cats via an oral–nasal route (eg, mutual grooming, nursing, sharing dishes). Adult cats develop a natural resistance to FeLV infection, but this resistance is not absolute.

References


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