
Disinfecting Dog Paws

This prospective clinical study evaluated a commercial gel containing guar, glycerin, triclosan, and ethanol for its ability to decrease dermal bacteria and yeast after a single application to the interdigital skin in 20 dogs with exudative pododermatitis. *Malassezia* spp yeast counts were performed via cytology, and bacterial culture was performed on different paws before and after the gel was applied according to manufacturer instructions. There was a significant decrease in *Malassezia* spp counts following treatment. Posttreatment bacterial cultures were sterile in

8 dogs that had no or low numbers (1-2 log counts) of colony-forming units (CFUs) before treatment. In dogs with higher numbers of CFUs before treatment, there was a significant decrease in CFUs following treatment. In 2 dogs, bacterial load either remained unchanged or increased following treatment. The authors conclude that the gel was effective in reducing yeast and bacterial loads in dogs with chronic diseases affecting the interdigital spaces; however, further studies are needed to assess the product's utility for everyday use and its impact on clinical disease. **This study was funded by Joker Technologies.*

Commentary

Many dogs resist having their paws handled. This becomes even more challenging when the paws are affected by yeast and/or bacterial

infections. Many products (eg, wipes, sprays, mousses, gels, shampoos) are on the market to help pet owners treat these infections and prevent recurrence. However, each presents its own challenges for certain owners and dogs. The product used in this study is intriguing and might provide an easy-to-use, dog-accepted method for disinfecting paws. Further research is needed to determine whether this product, available only in Europe, can ease clinical signs of pododermatitis. —Elizabeth Layne, DVM

Source

Ortalda C, Noli C, Cena T. Efficacy of an ethanol/guar/triclosan/glycerine gel on bacteria and yeast loads in canine pododermatitis: a pilot study. *J Small Anim Pract.* 2016;57(4):205-209.

Genetics & Cat Behavior

Several studies in human medicine have focused on oxytocin receptor gene (*OXTR*) polymorphisms and their role in social behaviors. This study examined the relationship between *OXTR* polymorphisms in cats and owner assessment of the cats' behaviors. Cats were either pets in private homes ($n = 56$) or belonged to 1 of 6 cat cafés ($n = 38$) where customers can freely interact with cats. Owners completed a detailed questionnaire that categorized cat behaviors into 4 groups: openness (playful, inquisitive, and curious), friendliness (adaptable, calm, and friendly), roughness (irritable,

dominant, forceful, and moody), and neuroticism (vigilant, nervous, and fearful). When genetic data from the cats were analyzed, the investigators found 3 single nucleotide polymorphisms in the *OXTR* of cats; 1 was significantly associated with roughness. Younger cats showed higher openness scores and older cats demonstrated higher roughness scores. The authors conclude these findings may have implications for animal welfare, as genetic testing could be used to predict compatibility in cat-cat and cat-human relationships.

Commentary

It is difficult to know how to interpret the results from this study and apply them in practice. The questionnaire used was adapted from one used to identify personality traits in Japanese Akitas. As cats are not dogs and

personality traits vary widely among dog breeds, the applicability is potentially questionable. Additionally, the cats in this study came from 2 different groups: pet cats and cats from cat cafés. It is likely the café cat population was biased given a reasonable assumption that an establishment would want its wait staff—including the resident cats—to be friendly. For the pet cats, it might be asked, “Who assessed the cat?” Two people in the same house could have vastly different interpretations of the same animal.—Karen A. Moriello, DVM, DACVD

Source

Arahoru M, Hori Y, Saito A, et al. The oxytocin receptor gene (*OXTR*) polymorphism in cats (*Felis catus*) is associated with “roughness” assessed by owners. *J Vet Behav.* 2016;11:109-112.