Non-accidental injury in dogs and cats

Dear Colleague,

Please help us with this survey!

What is this survey about?

The survey is about non-accidental injury (NAI) in dogs and cats. Non-accidental injury is also sometimes known as physical abuse. In children you may also know it as “Battered Child Syndrome”. In dogs and cats it therefore can be called “Battered Pet Syndrome”.

Why study NAI?

First: although non-accidental injury is known to occur in companion animals, recognition and diagnosis can be difficult for veterinary professionals. There is no published comprehensive account of the circumstances, clinical signs, and pathology of the “battered pet”. In child physical abuse, which has been recognized for over 40 years, guidelines are available for recognizing the condition and for helping to differentiate between accidental and non-accidental injury. For example, unexplained subdural hematoma and retinal hemorrhages are highly suggestive of NAI and a torn frenulum is virtually diagnostic.

The experiences of veterinary professionals who complete this questionnaire will help to ascertain the extent of NAI in dogs and cats as seen in clinical practice and to formulate guidelines to differentiate between accidental and non-accidental injury.

Secondly: a diagnosis of NAI is important because there is evidence that the occurrence of physical abuse to animals may indicate that similar abuse is being directed against other family members, such as the children. It may also be an early indicator of future violent behavior by the perpetrator.¹

Will your answers be anonymous?

Yes. Your name and address are not requested.

Will your answers be confidential?

Yes. All data collected will remain strictly confidential.

Please fax your completed survey to the CVMA at 303-318-0450 no later than April 1, 2003.