

Instructions for Post-Mortem Examination of a Heart from a Dog with Dilated Cardiomyopathy: For the Veterinary Surgeon

Your client has expressed a desire to support research into dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM). If this dog is known to have or suspected to have DCM, we are keen to receive fixed hearts for post-mortem examination, following the death or euthanasia of the dog. We are also keen to receive hearts from dogs believed to have normal hearts, who die or are euthanised for other reasons. If you are willing to take part in this study, please follow the instructions below. Please make the owner aware of your charges for this procedure.

1. Please record reason for death or euthanasia and any data of investigations carried out such as ECG, echocardiography, thoracic radiography. Please note any treatment the dog had received.
 2. Following euthanasia or death, remove the heart with great vessels and pulmonary veins from the chest via intercostal thoracotomy, as soon as possible after death (within 12 hours).
 3. Please note any gross abnormalities from the gross post-mortem examination, whether complete, or limited to the intercostal thoracotomy as above.
 4. Open the pericardial sac. Remove as much blood from atria and ventricles as possible by carefully washing out under a tap.
 5. Fill appropriate amount of 10% formalin into atria and ventricles using a syringe and place the heart into 10% formalin in a large pot of appropriate volume (likely to be a 500 ml pot).
 6. Allow to fix for about 2-4 days.
 7. Once fixed, please post the heart in its pot, having removed most of the formalin, but covering the heart either in formalin soaked cotton wool / paper towel or in a sealed plastic bag.
 8. Package according to Royal Mail current regulations. Make sure the pot is sealed (tape) and there is enough absorbent material surrounding it to soak up any leakage. Place pot into a sealable plastic bag. Put into a cardboard box or padded envelope.
 9. Complete details on the histopathology request form downloadable from: <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/vetpathology/notes/>.
 10. Post to the University of Liverpool:
Small Animal Teaching Hospital
Leahurst Campus
Chester High Road
Neston
CH64 7TE.
- If there is a pedigree for this dog, we are also keen to have a copy of these. If there is any surplus EDTA blood from diagnostic tests from such a case, we are also interested in receiving this for DNA.
 - For any queries about this, please contact Dr J. Dukes-McEwan, or one of the duty cardiologists, on the Small Animal Teaching Hospital number (0151 795 6100), or Email vetcard@liv.ac.uk or the Department of Veterinary Pathology, Veterinary Laboratory Services, Secretary: Tel: 0151-794-4265, Fax 0151-794-4268, Email: vpserve@liv.ac.uk