

RCVS Ethics Review Panel – lay summary example.

Do not copy.

Project title (to include disease being studied)

Does “FitStop” help reduce seizure frequency in severity in dogs with idiopathic epilepsy?

Type of study (Retrospective vs prospective; case series/case control/cohort/cross sectional/diagnostic method validation)

Prospective case series

Incidence of disease and what is not known/known

Epilepsy with no recognisable cause (idiopathic epilepsy) is thought to affect about 0.6% of dogs visiting vets in the UK. It can affect any dog but is most common in certain pure-breed dogs like border collies, beagles and boxers. There are two types of idiopathic epilepsy in dogs. The first type is where the dog has a classic “fit”, becoming unresponsive with paddling legs. In the second type, an individual body part is seen moving unusually, such as one leg; the rest of the time the dog will seem to be perfectly normal. We know that some dogs with idiopathic epilepsy will not live as long as they would without the condition. Having idiopathic epilepsy when they are young, having multiple fits back-to-back, or that go on for a long time makes an early death more likely. There are currently several treatments for idiopathic epilepsy, but all of them can cause side effects, and none completely stop the dogs having fits. FitStop is a drug that works in a new way compared to existing anti-epilepsy drugs. It has been safety tested on healthy dogs, but has not yet been trialed in dogs with idiopathic epilepsy in a home environment.

Hypothesis being tested and methodology

The study will help us find out if, and how well, FitStop works in managing how often and how badly dogs with idiopathic epilepsy have fits. Fifty dogs who have idiopathic epilepsy will be given FitStop for three months. Dogs that can take part need to be on just one other veterinary treatment for their epilepsy and need to have had tests that would tell us if there is another reason the dog has fits. The dogs will take the FitStop tablets for three months as well as the medications they are already on. Vets will perform blood tests and check the dogs at visits to the clinics. There will be three visits and there will be no charge for these blood tests or the FitStop tablets. We will also ask owners to complete questionnaires to tell us about how the dogs are doing at home.

Species being used

Dogs

Anticipated benefits and harms and why harm/benefit analysis shows it is worthwhile

This will be its first big trial of FitStop in dogs with idiopathic epilepsy. The potential benefits are huge for both dogs and owners if it works to reduce the risk and/or severity of fits. The potential harms in terms of side effects of FitStop will be very closely monitored by both vets and owners, and if there are any signs that individual dogs are being negatively affected in any way, their medication will be stopped.