

## The Error of the Millennium in Veterinary Medicine

### The background

Diseases of the musculoskeletal system in dogs have been a considerable veterinary problem for decades. Statistics compiled by the canine science associations indicate that 70-75% of the entire canine population are affected. More than half of the dogs of all breeds exhibit pathological changes, especially of the acetabulum and femur, known as hip dysplasia (HD) or canine hip dysplasia (CHD).

The etiological or causal background to canine hip dysplasia has hitherto generally been assumed to be multifactorial heredity. This term originates from farm and slaughter animal breeding and postulates that not only heredity but also environmental factors - especially nutrition - play a role in determining characteristics. The relative importance of these factors is expressed as the degree of heritability. For CHD, percentage values of up to 60 % have been assumed or, with reference to 1, of 0.2 to 0.6.

The dog breeding associations in the United States, United Kingdom, France and Germany developed X-ray systems designed to detect and combat hip dysplasia. But only in Germany and several other European countries was it attempted to eliminate CHD through selection, by excluding the dogs exhibiting this condition from breeding in the populations of the different breeds. These genetic measures, however, proved fruitless over a period of three decades. The Verband für das Deutsche Hundewesen (VDH) (German Kennel Club) failed in its attempts to gain approval for this initiative from the American Kennel Club (AKC), The Kennel Club (KC) or the Société Centrale Canine (SCC) in France. The incidence of hip dysplasia still persists at around 60-65 % in all the canine populations of the Western countries. When other pathological changes are included, the total skeletal morbidity rate is as high as 70-75 %. In most cases HD is accompanied by other skeletal diseases.

Veterinarians in the Western countries have traditionally advocated a "balanced diet" - without specifying further details - and have left it to the animal foodstuffs industry to provide dogs with "optimized complete diets". At present, around 80-85% of the total canine population is being fed completely or partially with industrially manufactured preformulated food, which has consequently become accepted as "healthy dog food". These new feeding methods, however, have been unable to significantly improve morbidity in terms of canine hip dysplasia. Indeed, there is also a very high total morbidity level of numerous nutritional diseases affecting various organ systems.

Marc Torel and Klaus Dieter Kammerer - a veterinarian and a scientific journalist with medical training - believe that breeding programs and industrially produced dog food in its present form cannot hope to bring about any fundamental improvements in the incidence of canine hip dysplasia because

CHD is not heritable and because existing dog food does not prevent, but is in fact the original cause of CHD. In these authors' view, canine hip dysplasia is induced solely by malnutrition.

An article in the TU caused a worldwide sensation

In 1996, the respected German journal "Tierärztliche Umschau" (TU) (Veterinary Review) published the continuation article "Topical notes on canine hip dysplasia" by Marc Torel and Klaus Dieter Kammerer, in which these authors traced the entire history of the development of canine hip dysplasia. They claimed that the hereditary nature of CHD had never been conclusively proven and is not supported by any objective evidence, and that breeding programs over three decades were thus inevitably doomed to failure (Tierärztliche Umschau, Volume 51, pp. 455 ff., 1996).

In the opinion of Torel/Kammerer, everything points to the probability that CHD has an alimentary/hormonal etiology and pathogenesis associated with malnutrition and increased production of somatotropin, triiodothyronine (T3), thyroxine (T4), parathormone and insulin-like growth factor IGF-I in the canine organism. The authors went on to draw conclusions regarding the nutrition and keeping of dogs and gave recommendations for the prevention of their skeletal diseases.

The essence of their argument is that CHD is of nutritional and hormonal origin. Malnutrition causes increased production of growth hormone, the thyroid hormones tri-iodothyronine and thyroxine, parathormone and insulin-like growth factor in dogs. The authors give a detailed analysis of the malnutrition and its adverse skeletal effects.

The book aroused great interest among veterinarians and met with a worldwide response. The authors and the editors of TU have received consistently positive feed-back from the USA, the whole of Europe, South Africa and Australia.

The Thirty Years' War and its bitter struggles

These sensational "Topical notes" formed the basis for the Compendium "The Thirty Years' War 1966-1996" published in 1997. The book, described with a certain selfirony by the authors Torel/ Kammerer as a controversial pamphlet, provided further data, facts and back-ground on the subject of canine hip dysplasia, especially in the expanded and revised 2nd edition published in March 1999 (ISBN 3-9807236-1-5).

The title is a deliberate reference to the religious war of 1618-1648 in Central Europe, since the attempts to combat hip dysplasia in the associations and societies, as described by the authors with more than a touch of irony, were not only characterized by the ferocity of a military campaign but, in the face of

prevailing dogmatism, were also ultimately futile.

With its "furor teutonicus" - its teutonic fury - the Compendium created an uproar. The authors Torel/Kammerer were not only skilled in verbal cut-and-thrust when deploying their arguments, but also brought up heavy artillery to support their attack. The hostilities, with their attacks and counter-attacks between the authors and their opponents in industry and veterinary medicine, are a cause of ongoing concern to various official agencies. The Bundestierärztekammer (BTK) (Federal German Veterinary Authority), the VDH (German Kennel Club) and the Waltham/Effem company boycotted the book on the basis of cartel agreements and suppressed reviews and reports in the veterinary literature, the societies and the media.

When these measures failed to prevent the distribution of the Compendium by word of mouth, Waltham/ Effem persuaded the BTK and the VDH to apply to Dortmund District Court to have the book banned. When even a temporary injunction obtained from the biased and prejudicially influenced 7th Civil Division on 23 Sept. 1999 failed to halt the sale of the book, the VDH intrigued with the Association of Publishers and Booksellers of the Federal Republic of Germany in Frankfurt and on 10 Feb. 2000 the book title was deleted from the list of available books (VLB list) This meant that "The Thirty Years' War" was effectively placed on the index of prohibited books, since it was no longer available through the book trade, or only with great difficulty. The first legal actions taken against the Association at Frankfurt District Court have so far been unsuccessful due to behind the scenes manipulation among the judges in Dortmund and Frankfurt resulting in agreements preferential to the VDH and its backers. Meanwhile, however, a promise has been extracted that the book will be reinstated and available once more through the book trade.

On the basis of predetermined decisions irreconcilable with the existing legal order and without any statutory basis, and in gross violation of the law of civil procedure, the 7th Civil Division of Dortmund District Court on 16 Mar. 2000 granted the applications of the VDH to have the book banned, thereby effectively curtailing the basic constitutional right of freedom of the press. The proceedings are not yet finalized and the judgement does not yet have the force of law, but is subject to judicial review by the Cartel Division of Duesseldorf Higher Regional Court following an appeal.

On the other hand, Christa Bremer, 3rd President of the VDH, its Secretary Bernhard Meyer and permanent legal adviser Claudia Marienfeldt are now under investigation by Dortmund Public Prosecutors Office on suspicion of making a false statutory declaration and giving false evidence in the course of proceedings. Investigative proceedings are also pending at the same Office into the incorrect and biased presiding judge Becker of the 7th Civil Division and his associate judges Altemeier and Meyer-Tegenthoff due to the suspicion of perverting the course of justice. The presiding judge of Hamm Higher Regional Court is also conducting a disciplinary review into manipulation and suspicion of corruption in Dortmund.

Proceedings are ongoing at the Public Prosecutors Office, Division for Commercial and Medical Crime in Mannheim, against the "trio infernale" of BTK, VDH and Waltham/ Effem due to suspicion of fraud, unfair competition and corruption with active and passive bribery. The computerized breeding value estimation system of Dr. Beuing at the Institute of Animal Breeding and Domestic Animal Genetics of Gießen University, as a piece of profitable charlatanism, will be among the objects of the Public Prosecutor's inquiries.

The "trio infernale" have no alternative but to defame and attempt to completely discredit the authors Torel/Kammerer, whose charges, if proved correct, would disgrace and compromise in an unprecedented manner the leading figures of canine science, the veterinary profession and animal foodstuffs industry for their blundering and charlatanism continuing over decades. The Compendium "The Thirty Years' War" has become a full-blown political issue.

#### The Error of the Millennium in Veterinary Medicine

One year later, on 20.09.2000, Klaus Dieter Kammerer published his new book entitled

"The Error of the Millennium in Veterinary Medicine"

subtitled

"Malnutrition-induced Hip Dysplasia as a Non-hereditary Skeletal Disease of Dogs"

<http://www.canine-health-concern.org.uk/>

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