

An online survey to determine owner experiences and opinions on the management of their hyperthyroid cats using oral anti-thyroid medications

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ABSTRACT

Hyperthyroidism is the most common feline endocrinopathy. Treatment options comprise anti-thyroid medication, iodine-restricted diet, surgical thyroidectomy and radioiodine. One hundred and eleven owners of hyperthyroid cats completed a detailed survey asking about their experiences and views on the management of hyperthyroidism. Male cats were slightly over-represented (60 cats, 54%). Concurrent chronic kidney disease was reported in 27% of the cats. Oral anti-thyroid medication was offered to 92% of owners. The final treatment decision was usually based on the veterinarian's recommendation or joint decision-making between the owner and the veterinarian. Almost all of the cats (103, 93%) had received oral anti-thyroid medication at some point in the course of their disease. Sixty-nine cats (62%) were receiving oral anti-thyroid medication at the time of survey completion. Management of hyperthyroidism using UK veterinary licensed oral anti-thyroid medication (Vidalta; MSD Animal Health, Felimazole; Dechra Veterinary Products) was associated with 72–75% success rates in terms of owner-assessed clinical outcome. The most important treatment priorities for owners were the prescription of the most accurate dose of medication and use of the lowest possible dose. None ranked once-daily treatment as most important to them, and 79% of owners said that they were, or would be, happy to dose their cat twice daily to control its hyperthyroidism. For 62% of owners, pilling their cat twice daily was not a problem. These results suggest that most cat owners are not a barrier to prescribing twice-daily anti-thyroid medication, if required.