



Vetstreet.com Explains Why Dogs are the Key to Curing Lou Gehrig's Disease

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Yardley, PA (March 12, 2014) – Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), or Lou Gehrig's disease, is a progressive neurological disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord of humans. The limited treatment options available, and fatal nature of ALS, have made the need for novel research approaches urgent.

[Dogs Go to Bat Against Lou Gehrig's Disease](#) examines how veterinary researchers are studying a canine model of ALS using dogs afflicted with a genetically related disease called degenerative myelopathy (DM) in order to help find a cure for both diseases.

Veterinarians initially believed degenerative myelopathy was a disease limited to the [German Shepherd breed](#). Additional research, however, has shown that this disease also affects such diverse breeds as [the sturdy Boxer](#), the low-slung [Pembroke Welsh Corgi](#), the fearless [Rhodesian Ridgeback](#) and the waterproof [Chesapeake Bay Retriever](#).

The strength of degenerative myelopathy as a model for the study of ALS lies in the many corollaries between the human and canine diseases. [Dogs Go to Bat Against Lou Gehrig's Disease](#) delves into these similarities including a key genetic mutation first found in the Corgi.

Using the dog as a disease model has some critical features that distinguish it from laboratory studies done in *in vitro* and rodent ALS models. Because pet dogs have superior cognitive ability compared to rodents, and because they are not laboratory animals but share the human environment, information derived from the study of DM in dogs can provide useful insights into ALS.

Backed by funding from the National Institutes of Health and the ALS Association, investigations into drug therapy for dogs with DM are now in preliminary phases and hopefully will lead to a more effective treatment of ALS in humans.

Read more at: [Dogs Go to Bat Against Lou Gehrig's Disease](#)

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About Dr. Ann Hohenhaus

Dr. Ann Hohenhaus, DVM, DACVIM, received her board certification in oncology from the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine. She is also certified in Small Animal Internal Medicine, and is one of only a handful of veterinarians certified by the American Society of Veterinary Journalists.

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