



UNIVERSITY
of
GLASGOW

Angelica Trust Newsletter

Jan 2005



Welcome

Welcome to the first newsletter of the Angelica Trust. I hope you find it interesting to be kept up to date with our work at the internationally-renowned Faculty of Veterinary Medicine here at the University of Glasgow. As one of our donors, I should like to tell you a little more about how your very generous gift has been used and what our plans for the future are.

Firstly, a little background about the Trust: the Angelica Trust was set up to receive donations to be used purely for research into feline coronavirus (FCoV) and feline infectious peritonitis (FIP). The first donation was made by Mr Wayne Carr in memory of his Tonkinese cat Angelica.



Here is little George (the kitten) who died of FIP, with his friend Armani. Armani is now helping FIP research by sending me his poops!

FCoV infects many cats, usually with very little consequence, but around 10% go on to develop the lethal disease FIP, which until the last year or so, was incurable. With the recent advent of feline interferon, around a quarter of cases now go into remission.

I have been working on research into FIP for 17 years. My dream is to eradicate FCoV, and therefore FIP, from the face of the earth. The first step is to educate as many people as possible, via the website, about this terrible disease, to encourage cat breeders to know whether their cats are infected and to breed FCoV free kittens.

Greater understanding of how the virus interacts with cats



In 2004, pharmaceutical company, Pfizer, generously donated \$25,000, enabling me to employ a technician, Kirsty Maitland, for 2.5 days a week for a year and we are very grateful for this support. Kirsty is working on the interaction of the virus with the white blood cells (cells of the immune system) of cats with FIP.

We are very grateful to the young Dutch scientist Fermin Simons for sharing his virus detecting technique with us and a big “thank you” to Larry Ritzhaupt of Pfizer for his generosity. Kirsty’s funding will run out in May 2005.

Cat litter with anti-viral properties

The major source of FCoV infection – and therefore FIP – is faeces in cat litter. It occurred to me that if a litter had disinfectant incorporated, it might reduce virus dose to cats and the spread of FCoV. To our surprise, we found that many existing litters had anti-viral activity,

to varying extents (see catvirus.com for further details). One domestic breeding cattery which was using Tesco's own brand litter and houses the cats in pens in small groups, has eliminated the virus from most of the cats. However, the litter is not a total solution in itself: given that FCoV can be shed in billions of particles per gram of faeces: even a litter which destroys or binds 99% of the virus, will still leave millions of particles which can infect other cats. In addition, the Tesco litter is clay-based, so is dusty and may track more than some other litters. Unfortunately, a field trial to assess the exact effect of cat litter on FCoV transmission would cost around £100,000 and would need to run for 2-3 years, so remains a dream at present.

Millions of wee plastic tubes!



Some of you will have received "thank you" emails saying "I used your donation to buy millions of wee plastic tubes" – what on earth do I do with them? I extract virus from cat poop, get the RNA genome (i.e. the virus's genetic code) out of the virus, copy the RNA into DNA, then multiply the DNA until it reaches levels I can see. This process is called RT-PCR. Each of these stages requires millions of little plastic tubes of different colours and pipette tips! So a big thank you!

Cost: £17.00 for a bag of 500.

My first ever brand new PCR machine!

Detecting the virus requires a PCR machine. I had a second hand PCR machine which died a couple of years ago – since then, I've been going round the University begging for a couple of hours on other people's machines, which has resulted in some messed up experiments. Some recent fantastic donations have enabled me to buy my own machine for the very first time. This makes a HUGE difference – so an enormous THANK YOU!

Cost: £3,400.



What have you been doing to raise money?

There have been sponsored fasts, Lorraine Twyman organised an internet auction – thanks to the Norsk Skogkattring cat club in Norway for donating the picture for the auction.



The Orion Foundation has sold pins for FIP research and made a wonderful quilt; an anonymous cat lover from London has given astonishing donations which she's had matched by the Charities Aid Foundation; some people give regularly, by standing order. And most often, people have just felt compassion for these poor, sick little cats, and have got out their cheque book or credit card and sent me money. My research would not exist without you all – THANK YOU!

The Polish Norwegian Forest Cat club who bid long and hard to win this lovely picture.

Donations in kind

As well as all of the donors who either give money or raise it to give, there have been fantastic donations of TIME by people – Mel Amundson, web designer – most of all. She made this entire project possible by freely giving of her web designing abilities. Initial quotes for web design from other professionals ran into thousands of pounds, if it hadn't been for Mel, there would be no catvirus.com! In the last year Renata Fernandes turned up with the offer to translate the website into other languages – she asked for volunteers and an astonishing 22 people translated the site into French, German, Dutch, Italian, Swedish – with Spanish and Portuguese to follow soon! So huge thank you to Mel, Renata and colleagues for enabling the message to reach so many people.

Last, but most importantly – there are the people and cats who are actually living with this virus and sending blood samples, faecal samples, and sometimes the body of their beloved cat to help my research. Since I don't use experimental animals I absolutely rely on volunteers and naturally infected cats – my research couldn't happen without you. Thank you. Of course, if I succeed, there won't be any of you left in 10 years' time!!!! The virus will be eliminated!

What we still need

- Even more little plastic tubes and pipettes! (*£17.50 for 500*)
- A big freezer which can preserve virus at -80oC (*£7,500*)
- To buy the chemicals needed to do the experiments to discover more about natural feline coronavirus infection and FIP. (*hundreds of pounds a month*)
- To follow naturally infected cats and, with the help of their humans, eliminate this virus from the cats. This will involve taking samples of faeces and occasionally blood. (*each experiment to detect the virus costs around £25.00 to perform*)
- To perform post mortems on naturally infected cats and to then cremate their bodies and return the ashes to the people who loved them. (*around £200 each post mortem, cremation and casket*)
- To keep Kirsty, my technical assistant, so that more FIP research can be undertaken.
- I would love to do a properly controlled study of different FIP treatment protocols, but that would cost in the region of *a hundred thousand pounds* and I'd need to employ a veterinary graduate PhD student to do the work.
- ***Please note my research involves only naturally infected cats, not experimental cats or experiments on any other kind of animals.***

Want to help some more? Here's How!

giftaid it

If you, or someone you think would be interested in helping on a regular basis, then there are several ways you might like to consider:

You can make a donation through our website: www.catvirus.com

You can request a Giving Form. Under Gift Aid, if you are a UK tax payer, this will allow us to reclaim tax which you have already paid on your gift, increasing its value to us by almost a third. Donors need only complete one Gift Aid declaration, to ensure all their subsequent gifts, whether one-off or given regularly, are tax effective. You can print off a Gift Aid form through our website.

Bequests

If you would like to consider supporting a gift outside your lifetime, you may like to consider leaving a bequest once you are sure your loved ones have been taken care of. This has several tax advantages and your solicitor will be able to advise you. However, if you would like further information and answers to some basic questions, please contact the University Development and Alumni Office on 0141 330 4951 and ask for the leaflet, "Bequests and Wills Guide" or visit www.gla.ac.uk/alumni.

The University of Glasgow charity number is CR43991.

Donations

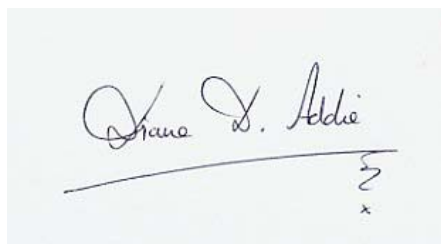
With best wishes and deepest gratitude to the following:

<u>Contributor</u>	<u>In Loving Memory</u>
Melisa Johnston-Pratt	Pepper
Valerie Black	Wee Willie Wallace
Val MacQueen	Posie
Katja Jacob	Kalian the Fair
Lars and Andrea Klores	Piper
Renata Fernandes	Trojan
Laura Frazier	Magnum
Dorothy S. Dady	Matteo
Daniella Thompson	Minx
Laura Laff	Andy
Mr and Mrs Sutphin	Shelby
Rona Kennedy	Bruno
Dan Doty	Domino
Sue Startin	Evander
Nada and Karim Makarem	Zuki
Sue and Graeme Davison	Martouf and Khepra

..... as well as to the others who remained anonymous.

I hope this first newsletter has given you some more insight into the work we are doing to try to eradicate this terrible disease. Every contribution, no matter what size, is put to good use.

Thank you for your support.

A photograph of a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature reads "Diane D. Addie" in a cursive script. Below the signature is a horizontal line, and there is a small "x" mark at the end of the line.

Dr Diane D. Addie