

Update from Dr. Waters - February 2010

Rottweiler Longevity Research is Featured News Story in AVMA Journal

Very few scientific studies — less than five studies over the last two years — ever merit a feature story in the news column of the prestigious AVMA Journal. But on March 1, 2010, the Rottweiler Longevity Study conducted by scientists at the Center for Exceptional Longevity Studies, Gerald P. Murphy Cancer Foundation, became one of those [exceptional research studies](#). The research, supported by the Rottweiler Health Foundation (RHF), has demonstrated a link between keeping ovaries longer and exceptional longevity. The results were published in *Aging Cell*, the world's top impact biology of aging scientific journal. Since its publication in December 2009, the research findings have commanded the attention of many veterinarians and dog owners. In addition to the AVMA Journal, the story has been featured in [DVM Magazine](#), [Veterinary Practice News](#), [MSNBC.com](#), and NBC TV.

It sure is rewarding to see this research is now beginning to help our beloved pets by **recalibrating the conversation** about the pros and cons of early elective ovariohysterectomy. Thanks to our work, pet owners are pausing and considering what is best for their bitch, rather than making a one-size-fits-all decision. Not just Rottweiler owners, but owners of other breeds as well. Spread the word! Visit the [GPMCF website](#). The Murphy Foundation website contains useful information my team has pulled together that puts the research in context, answering many of the most frequently asked questions. You can even get a copy of the original scientific article.

Opinions on the internet about the research have run the entire gamut from praise to persecution — a totally expected reaction when new ideas try to find their way amidst the preconceived beliefs of folks deeply entrenched in a certain way of thinking. One of the comments that I've read with great interest: "This study is flawed because it is inconclusive and raises more questions than it answers." Perfect, I say. The very best research always raises more questions than answers. Otherwise, that research is a dead-end street ... one you should never have walked down. **We are proud that by working so closely with Rottweiler owners and the RHF our research has generated a whole new set of research questions that need to be pursued.** We are committed to leading that new research direction.

Proof of the "right track" nature of our aging research comes from the recognition we have recently received for our longevity research. In December 2009, I became the recipient of a **2009 Glenn Award for Research in Biological Mechanisms of Aging**. This award from the Glenn Foundation for Medical Research provides financial support to augment the research conducted in the Murphy Foundation's Center for Exceptional Longevity Studies. But the good news doesn't stop there. In November 2009, the **National Institute on Aging (NIA)** of NIH formally issued to the scientific community a request for information soliciting input on the feasibility of employing pet dogs in the study of aging. It is anticipated that the information

gathered will be used to develop research opportunities advancing the application of aging studies in pet dogs as a win-win situation to promote healthy aging in pets and people. Never before have pet dogs been considered by the NIA as serious workhorses for aging research. It's clear that **our work has illuminated a new research path** — the notion that studying healthy aging in pet dogs can really add something to the work other aging researchers are doing using “conventional” species ... worms, flies, and mice in cages. Taken together, the Glenn Award and the call-out by NIA are turning the spotlight on Murphy scientists as innovators ready to take a leadership role in the field of aging research.

So, what's next? We are studying closely the complex association between aging and cancer. For sure, my research team will continue to explore the association between ovaries and longevity. After all, slowing down aging may turn out to be one of our most potent defenses against developing cancer. Later in 2010, look for the next story that will emerge from the Center for Exceptional Longevity Studies at the Murphy Cancer Foundation: **What can exceptionally long-lived Rottweilers teach us about cancer resistance?**

My research and teaching demand that I travel quite a bit. Driving along the highway, especially along those bothersome bits that are under construction, I regularly encounter the sign that says: “Your tax dollars at work.” As you read more and more about our cutting-edge aging and cancer research, I hope you experience the intense satisfaction of knowing that these big, new ideas reflect a work zone of another kind. The sign here reads: “Your Rottweiler Health Foundation dollars at work.” With your help, we have made solid progress. There are many new vistas on the horizon. It is your caring support that makes all of this possible.

Hyperlink addresses:

AVMA Journal <http://www.avma.org/onlnews/javma/mar10/100301g.asp>

DVM Magazine <http://veterinarynews.dvm360.com/dvm/article/articleDetail.jsp?id=646838>

Veterinary Practice News <http://www.veterinarypracticenews.com/vet-dept/small-animal-dept/study-links-ovaries-and-longevity.aspx>

MSNBC.com <http://www.gpmcf.org/msnbc.pdf>

Gerald P. Murphy Cancer Foundation <http://www.gpmcf.org>