



WINN FELINE FOUNDATION

For the Health and Well-being of All Cats

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DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF *FELINE TRITRICHOMONAS FOETUS* (T. FOETUS) THROUGH TARGET SURFACE ANTIGENS

PROJECT STUDY: Diagnosis and treatment of feline *Tritrichomonas foetus* (T. foetus) through target surface antigens

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Interim project report summary, W15-011

Tritrichomonas foetus (Tf) is an intestinal parasite now recognized as a primary cause of chronic diarrhea in domestic cats worldwide, with prevalence rates as high as 30% especially in high-density housing environments. Only one treatment is currently available for treatment of feline Tf, which is associated with risk of side effects and drug resistance. Unfortunately, the infection is also difficult to diagnose.

A similar organism affects cattle. For the cattle organism, two cell surface markers have been shown to play a role in establishment of infection and induction of clinical signs. These researchers investigated whether these same markers are present on the feline organism. If present, their next step is to determine if these markers also play a role the intestinal disease of cats.

They evaluated three methods for detection of the cell surface markers, and found that all strains of the feline organism had these same cell surface markers found on the bovine organism. While these markers did not appear to function in disease production in cats, the finding that these markers are present on feline strains of the organism is encouraging. The researchers believe these markers can be used to develop an improved diagnostic assay for detection of this organism in the feces of affected cats. Work is ongoing.

Summary prepared by Melissa A. Kennedy, DVM, PhD, DACVIM © 2016

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