WINN FELINE FOUNDATION

For the Health and Well-being of All Cats

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WINN FELINE FOUNDATION AWARDS SIX GRANTS FOR FELINE HEALTH STUDIES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE GEORGE SYDNEY AND PHYLLIS REDMOND MILLER TRUST

Wyckoff, NJ, November 16, 2020: Winn Feline Foundation is pleased to announce the award of six feline health research grants funded in partnership with the George Sydney and Phyllis Redman Miller Trust at the San Francisco Foundation for 2020. Winn Feline Foundation is making the following recommendations for Miller Trust grant awards totaling $137,720 plus $26,779 from Winn funding for the following studies.

Grants were awarded for the following research studies:

MT20-002 - *"Impact of iron deficiency on short-term T-cell response to treatment in cats with inflammatory bowel disease".* Principal Investigators: Maria Jugan, Kansas State University; Catherine Langston, The Ohio State University. $*35,000*

Cats with intestinal (GI) disease have low blood iron levels and low vitamin B12. Low iron is associated with worse signs of GI disease in people, yet this condition has not been studied specifically in cats. This study may show that cats with iron deficiency have a decreased response to standard-of-care treatment for GI disease, therefore, results might expand treatment options for cats affected by long-standing GI disease.

MT20-004 - *"Characterization of myeloid cell phenotypes and frequencies in feline cancers and infectious disease".* Principal Investigator: Ellen Sparger, University of California, Davis. *$20,000*

The immune system plays a pivotal role in how a pet cat will control disease and respond to therapy in many illnesses including cancer and viral infections. A specific arm of the immune system includes cells designated as myeloid cells. Different types and subcategories of myeloid cells can be distinguished by a special technology called flow cytometry. Examination of these myeloid cells in feline cancer and infectious disease has been relatively limited. This study will develop and validate a panel that measures these cell types in healthy cats and in samples from cats with a particular cancer, feline oral squamous cell carcinoma. Later, this panel can be used to investigate other cancers and infectious disease like feline infectious peritonitis (FIP).

MT20-007 - *"Effects of dual antithrombotic therapy using rivaroxaban and clopidrogrel on platelet function and coagulation parameters in cats".* Principal investigators: Joshua Stern; Ronald Hak Long Li, University of California, Davis. *$18,801*

Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM), a common heart disease in cats, can lead to severe, life-threatening disease such as heart failure or severe blood clots known as arterial thromboembolism (ATE). In humans, the use of multiple drugs to prevent thrombosis in at-risk patients is considered a superior treatment protocol to using a single agent therapy. The benefits of combining two preventative therapies, clopidogrel and rivaroxaban, requires further investigation in cats. This study proposes to compare the safety and effectiveness of single agent therapy of clopidogrel or rivaroxaban to the combined dual therapy with both drugs.

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MT20-008 - ***" Development of improved cell culture systems for feline coronavirus and FIP vaccine development, Aim 2".*** **Principal Investigators: Gary Whittaker, Cornell University; Susan Baker, Loyola University.** ***$17,500***

FIP is a devastating disease of cats for which much remains unknown. FIP virus replicates poorly in the laboratory, which limits the ability to understand the mechanisms underlying the disease process. With this study, researchers hypothesize that FIPV type I enters cells, including macrophages, through the ACE2 receptor, as has been determined with SARS-CoV-2 in people. They propose to show that ACE2 and host proteases are key drivers of viral pathogenesis in FIP.

MT20-011 - ***"Feline congenital primary hypothyroidism: Establishing normal reference intervals and treatment guidelines".*** **Principal Investigators: Karen Vernau, Stanley Marks, Sean Heulsebosch, William Vernau, University of California, Davis.** ***$35,000***

Hypothyroidism is a disorder characterized by a deficiency of thyroid hormone and is not well understood in kittens. The condition is associated with failure to grow, mental dullness, constipation, and death. Treatment involves thyroid hormone supplementation which is readily available and inexpensive. Due to diagnosing hypothyroidism in a number of cases where orphan kittens failed to thrive, researchers have indicated this condition may be more common than previously known. Their goal is to establish normal reference intervals for thyroid hormone in kittens at 4 and 8 weeks of age, and to establish treatment guidelines for hypothyroidism in kittens.

MT20-013, MTW20-013 - ***"High Density Cat DNA Array Genome-Wide Association Studies".*** **Principal Investigator: Leslie A. Lyons, University of Missouri-Columbia.** ***$38,198*** [The George Sydney and Phyllis Redmond Miller Trust Fund ***($11,419).*** Additional Winn Feline Foundation funding: Burmese Cat Club funds ***($8,370.19)*** plus the Amyloidosis Fund at Winn Feline Foundation ***($18,408.81)*** for ***$26,779***].

A high-density DNA array for the domestic cat is in development. This array is thirty-times more powerful than the previous cat DNA array. Through genome-wide association studies (GWAS) which use such DNA arrays, DNA variants (or mutations) influencing traits can be localized. This project will focus on the condition of amyloidosis in Oriental/Siamese cats to narrow down the region(s) of the genome associated with this disease. In addition, worldwide populations of cat breeds, especially Burmese, will be scanned for a DNA variant to determine correlation with Ehrlos-Danlos Syndrome so a genetic test can be developed.

Winn Feline Foundation *is a non-profit organization established in 1968 that supports studies to improve cat health. Since 1968, the Winn Feline Foundation has funded over $7.5 million in health research for cats at more than 30 partner institutions world-wide. For further information, go to www.winnfelinefoundation.org.*