

# Risk factors for cat mortality in UK adoption centres



Murray, J.K., Skillings, B\* and Gruffydd-Jones, T.J.

Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences, University of Bristol, Langford, Bristol, UK

\* Cats Protection, National Cat Centre, Chelwood Gate, Haywards Heath, Sussex, UK



**Introduction** The risk factors for mortality of cats housed in adoption centres (ACs) has not previously been investigated and was hypothesised to be affected by factors relating to the:

- Cat (e.g. age, gender, previously owned/stray, vaccination history)
- The AC environment (e.g. time in centre, specific centre)

Cats Protection (CP), the largest feline charity in the UK rehoming approximately 60,000 cats/year, was used to provide data for this study.

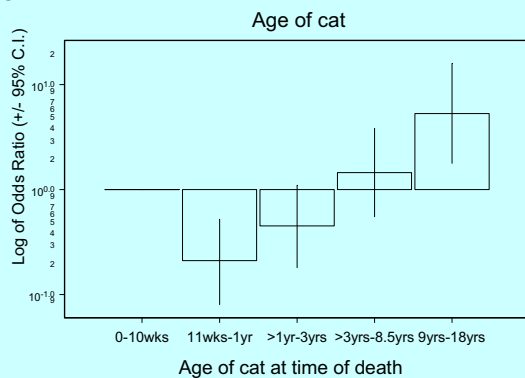


## Materials and Methods

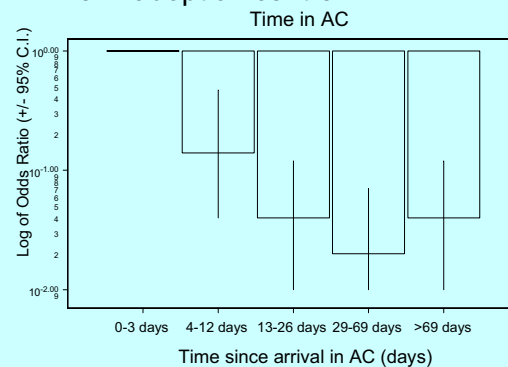
- An unmatched case-control study design was used.
- Data were collected for 374 cases (cats that died / were euthanased during the first six months of 2005 whilst housed at one of 21 ACs) and 361 controls (randomly selected cats that did not die / were not euthanased).
- Univariable logistic regression and multivariable logistic regression were used to analyse the data.

**Results** The following variables were significant in the multivariable model:

\* Age



\* Time in adoption centre



\* Neutered status (Neutered OR=1.0, entire OR=2.5, 95%CI 1.1-5.4)

\* Background of cat (Owned OR=1.0, stray/feral/born at AC OR=2.0, 95%CI 1.2-3.5)

\* Health of cat (Good OR=1.0, fair OR=3.8, 95% CI 2.1-6.7, poor OR=9.6, 95%CI 4.9-18.8)

\* FIV status (Negative/not tested OR=1.0, positive=40.9, 95%CI 8.9-187.98)

**Summary** Cats aged  $\leq 10$  weeks and  $\geq 9$  years were at the greatest risk of mortality when compared to cats of other ages. An increased risk of mortality was also associated with cats admitted to ACs unneutered, in fair/poor health, stray/feral cats and cats born at the AC. The risk of mortality decreased as the time in the AC increased from 0-69 days. Cats testing positive for FIV had a higher mortality risk than cats testing negative for FIV. Knowledge of these risk factors can inform intervention strategies aimed at reducing the risk of cat mortality at ACs.

**Acknowledgements** Thank you to Cats Protection AC staff for collecting the data for this study.