

JCC RESEARCH SEMINAR

TOPIC

Understanding cardiovascular disease in great apes
and Vit D implications

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Abstract:

In non-human hominids (great apes) heart failure is a common cause of death with a high prevalence of so called Idiopathic Myocardial Fibrosis (IMF; up to 80% in Europe and North America), a disease which is also seen in humans.

IMF is a progressive, often fatal heart disease of unknown aetiopathogenesis but may have its severity potentially linked to low vitamin D levels similar to what is currently known in humans.

Preliminary studies by our group, the Ape Heart project, could show that season, health status and outdoor access had a significant effect on great ape vitamin D status and a high proportion were under the human threshold of deficiency. Apart from the well-known role of vitamin D on calcium homeostasis and musculoskeletal system, vitamin D has a wide range of other biological functions and prolonged vitamin D deficiency has been associated with a variety of disorders in humans such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, autoimmune diseases, and respiratory infections. Vitamin D plays a crucial role in overall health and its deficiency is considered a global public health concern in humans undergoing currently extensive international investigations.

In this talk, I will present our clinical and pathological cardiovascular findings in European zoo-housed great apes. I will also discuss further investigations like identifying cardiovascular biomarker signatures, next steps and research goals, including how we hope to collaborate with zoos in China and great ape sanctuaries in Africa and the Asian Pacific area in the near future.

Keywords: Cardiomyopathy, Vit D deficiency, cardiac biomarkers, great apes

Speaker's Biography:

Kerstin Baiker graduated from the Vet School at the Ludwigs-Maximilian University in Munich, Germany, in 2004. She then continued her studies for a doctoral thesis as a cooperation project between the medical Institute of Diabetes Research (working group for Mitochondrial Genetics) and the Institute for Neuropathology in Munich, Germany. After gaining her doctor title, she started working as a lecturer Institute for Neuropathology. Her research and teaching focused on neuropathological aspects of large, small and lab animals.

In 2009, Kerstin came to the Royal Veterinary College in London to complete a residency in veterinary anatomic pathology. She passed the certifying examination to become a Diplomate of the European College of Veterinary Pathologists and joined the Nottingham School of Veterinary Medicine and Science where she had a leading role in establishing a diagnostic service and an ECVP approved and successful training centre in veterinary anatomic pathology.

She is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, member of several committees of the European College of Veterinary Pathologists, the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation and is one of the very few certified specialists in forensic veterinary pathology in Europe.

ALL ARE WELCOME

REGISTRATION / ENQUIRIES

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