

In spite of the rapid development of more sophisticated imaging modalities, radiography is still a key routine diagnostic aid for the investigation of lameness, and many musculoskeletal, abdominal and thoracic conditions. However, radiographic studies are often complemented by MRI or ultrasound studies to provide our Specialists with the most accurate diagnosis possible. If needed, the Diagnostic Imaging Service has access to external nuclear medicine or computed tomography facilities.

In addition to the capture of static radiographic images, fluoroscopy is also available at Dick White Referrals. This is a key instrument in many minimally invasive procedures such as tracheal or vascular stenting.

When required, contrast substances can be used to increase contrast and visibility of specific organs:

- Barium sulphate given orally to a dysphagic animal to assess the swallowing process
- Iodinated water-soluble substances administered into the vascular system of patients to assess vascular anomalies (eg mesenteric venography to outline the type of portosystemic shunting), urinary disease (eg excretory urography) or cardiac malformations (eg angiocardiology to outline valvular disease or communications between cardiac chambers).

Interventional Radiology is a growing area in veterinary medicine and we are one of a few veterinary centres in Europe to offer this service.

Canine Health Schemes

The BVA runs 2 Canine Health Schemes in which radiography is used as a screening method: the Hip Scheme and the Elbow Scheme. Any dog over one-year-old can be tested under these schemes.

From autumn 2010 we will offer the University of Pennsylvania's PennHip Scheme which assesses

canine hip joint laxity, the first detectable sign of hip dysplasia in young dogs. PennHip can be performed on dogs as young as 4 months and therefore the onset of hip osteoarthritis can be predicted before dogs reach breeding age.

Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, in addition to some other small dog breeds, have a predisposition for syringohydromelia and hydrocephalus. We offer an MRI study based on the suggested protocol for the proposed BVA/KC scheme.

For all these schemes, dogs must be permanently identified by either microchip or tattoo, and permanent identification and registration documents are required at the time of the examination.

Education

The Diagnostic Imaging Service at Dick White Referrals is committed to the provision of educational programmes, including regular CPD training to practitioners, residents, interns and nurses. As a private referral practice, we are proud to be one of the few non-academic centres in the UK to receive accreditation from the European College of Veterinary Diagnostic Imaging (ECVDI) and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons as a recognised Residency and Certificate training centre, respectively.

Diagnostic Imaging Reporting Service

We offer an imaging reporting service for referring veterinarians. Images should be submitted preferably in a DICOM format to avoid the loss of image quality which occurs with JPEG format. For local practices, a collection/delivery service is available. Radiographs and scans are read within 24 hours of receipt and reports are faxed and returned with radiographs within 48 hours. Submissions should be accompanied by a referral form, available from www.dickwhitereferrals.com

