

WANTED: Labrador & Golden retriever volunteers for a research project

My name is Diane van Rooy. I am a veterinarian undertaking a Masters research project on genetics of separation-related distress in dogs. Affected dogs show physical and behavioural signs of distress in the absence of their owner, with the most common signs being barking, howling, destruction, pacing, house soiling, escape attempts and self trauma. Anyone who has had a dog with separation-related distress knows how devastating it can be for both dog and owner.

If we can identify the genes involved, we can potentially help breeders select against the disorder. We could identify at-risk dogs before they show signs, possibly preventing the onset with early management. This project could even help develop more specific medications to improve the quality of life of affected dogs.

Although the disorder can affect any breed, we are initially looking to recruit Labradors and Golden retrievers and we need dogs that show signs of separation related distress and those that do not.

What's involved?

We will ask you to fill in a questionnaire that will assist us to determine if your dog will be helpful to our research. Depending upon your responses in the questionnaire we may also be collecting a DNA sample (cheek swab) from your dog. Most dogs will have a sample taken. This procedure will cause minimal discomfort to your pet.

Anyone happy to be involved can email me at diane.vr@sydney.edu.au or phone 0423 087 823.



This project is being carried out by The Faculty of Veterinary Science at the University of Sydney.