



150 Years
Science For A Better Life

Bayer HealthCare LLC
Communications
PO Box 390
Shawnee Mission, KS 66201
USA
913.268.2000
www.bayerhealthcare.com

News Release

Bayer-AAFP study reveals half of America's 74 million cats are not receiving regular veterinary care

Bayer HealthCare partners with the American Association of Feline Practitioners to advance feline healthcare

Shawnee, Kan. / Hillsborough, N.J., July 20, 2013 – A study conducted by Bayer HealthCare, in collaboration with the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP), found that more than half of the nation's cats (52 percent) had not been taken to the veterinarian within the last year for needed checkups. Because the first two years of a cat's life equal 24 years of a human's life – with each successive year equivalent to four human years – annual examinations are essential to keeping cats healthy and preventing potentially serious disease problems.¹

The study uncovered several reasons behind this finding, ranging from how we acquire our cats and our relationships with them, to their personalities and our perceptions of the healthcare they need. These and other pet owner insights from the Bayer Veterinary Care Usage Study III: Feline Findings were presented today at the American Veterinary Medical Association's Annual Convention in Chicago. This third in a series of studies sponsored by Bayer HealthCare LLC Animal Health Division was presented in partnership with the AAFP and Brakke Consulting. The study's findings are based on a nationally representative online survey of 1,938 cat owners, as well as several focus groups conducted across the U.S. Sixty percent of survey respondents were from cat-only households, while 40 percent had both cats and dogs.

"The Bayer Veterinary Care Usage Study III: Feline Findings confirms that we treat cats differently than dogs when it comes to caring for their health, in part because cats are so effective at masking signs of illness and injury," said Ian Spinks, President and General Manager, Bayer HealthCare LLC Animal Health Division, North America. "Since only half as many cats get annual

^[1]International Society of Feline Medicine and American Association of Feline Practitioners, *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery*, "AAFP-AAHA Feline Life Stage Guidelines," (2010) 12, 43-54, <http://www.catvets.com/guidelines/practice-guidelines/life-stage-guidelines>. Accessed July 15, 2013.

check-ups as dogs, Bayer is working with the American Association of Feline Practitioners to get the word out that cats need regular veterinary care, too.”

The cat found me, but didn't bring along an owner's manual

To understand why pet owners typically are more attentive to their dogs' health needs than their cats', it is important to take a few steps back to understand how we typically acquire our cats and how we relate to them versus dogs, according to Elizabeth Colleran, DVM, MS, Dipl ABVP, owner of Chico Hospital for Cats, Chico, Calif., and past president of AAFP.

According to the study, the more engaged an individual is in selecting a new pet – especially if acquired from a breeder, pet store or shelter – the more likely the pet will receive annual check-ups. For instance, dogs, which are often purchased or adopted for hundreds or thousands of dollars, frequently have written veterinary care instructions.

However, the study found that cat acquisition is usually informal. The majority of cats – 59 percent – were acquired without prior intent, with many being lost or abandoned cats. “The cat found me” or “the cat showed up at my house” were common responses. In addition, 69 percent of cats were obtained at no cost, with little or no initial instruction on proper veterinary care. “Unfortunately, cats do not come with a care label or tag and, in fact, many are acquired because they are perceived to be low-cost pets,” said Dr. Colleran.

A cat is a pet, but a dog is a companion

“In the Bayer Veterinary Care Usage Study III: Feline Findings, owners of both dogs and cats expressed an emotional attachment to their cats, but clearly there was a marked difference in their relationship with their cats as compared to their dogs,” said Dr. Colleran. “Owners said they consider their dogs to be companions and dependent, and their cats to be pets and independent. As a result, it appears they consciously or subconsciously perceive dogs may have more value than cats and this can influence how they think and act on their cat's healthcare needs.”

A cat's personality and habitat linked to provision of healthcare

The Feline Findings Study found the vast majority – 81 percent – of cat owners believed that cats are very self-sufficient and independent and, therefore, required little attention. Dogs, on the other hand, were viewed as much more dependent and needy.

But “low maintenance” doesn't mean “no maintenance,” according to Cristiano von Simson, DVM, MBA, Director of Veterinary Technical Services at Bayer HealthCare LLC Animal Health Division,

North America. “Cats’ independent nature makes them appear more standoffish than dogs, and they keep secrets by often hiding signs of illness,” he said. “The study showed that 81 percent of owners believe their cat was in excellent health, while 53 percent said their cat had never been sick or injured. These perceptions help account for why cats visit the veterinarian less. Dog owners already consider visits to the veterinarian part of responsible pet ownership. It should be that way for cats, too.”

A cat’s habitat further complicates the feline healthcare picture. The study revealed 63 percent of cats in cat-only households live indoors exclusively, never going outside. In turn, many owners assume their indoor cats are safe from disease, not realizing many feline diseases – such as diabetes, heart conditions and thyroid deficiencies – are not infectious and cannot be “caught” outdoors.

Feline resistance single biggest obstacle to veterinary visits

According to the Feline Findings Study, 58 percent of cats hate going to the veterinary clinic and, for 38 percent of owners, just thinking about it was stressful. The study found that most cats intensely dislike being placed into a cat carrier and transported by car, so many owners simply opt not to put up with the hassle.

The *Feline Five*: five things cat owners can do to improve feline healthcare

“There are five easy steps owners can take right now to increase the likelihood their cats will be healthy,” said Bayer’s Dr. von Simson. “We call them the *Feline Five*.”

1. Make the cat carrier a familiar, happy place.
 - Reduce feline resistance to the cat carrier by placing it near where the cat rests with soft bedding, leave the door open and occasionally place treats in the carrier.
2. Familiarize your cat with your car.
 - Prepare your cat for the car ride to the clinic by taking her on rides in the carrier as you run normal errands.
3. Recognize the importance of regular check-ups.
 - Since the first two years of a cat’s life equal 24 years of a human’s life – with each successive year equivalent to four human years – your cat needs veterinary check-ups at least annually.
4. Realize that cats keep secrets, so you must be a cat detective.
 - Health problems often go undetected for a long time because cats hide signs of illness, so be attentive.
5. Know the signs of illness and injury.

- Signs include: changes in interactions, activity, sleeping habits, food and water consumption, grooming and/or vocalization; unexplained weight loss or gain; signs of stress; and/or bad breath.

What veterinarians can do to improve feline healthcare

“Here are things veterinarians can do to help ensure their feline patients get the healthcare they need and deserve,” said the AAFP’s Dr. Colleran.

1. The Feline Findings Study found 83 percent of new cats are taken to the veterinarian within the first year of ownership, so make that first visit with your cat patient count by emphasizing the need for annual exams, teaching appropriate cat care – including carrier use – and advising on signs of illness to watch for.
2. Send home written care instructions and follow-up with well-care reminders.
3. Make your office cat-friendly by creating a calm, non-threatening environment for your patients, including a cat-only waiting area or section, and exam room.
4. Become an AAFP *Cat Friendly Practice* (CFP); learn more at <http://catfriendlypractice.catvets.com/>.

About the Bayer Veterinary Care Usage Study

The **first phase** of the study focused on the decline in veterinary usage from the pet owners’ perspective, identifying six root causes: the economic impact of the recession; fragmentation of veterinary services; the use of the Internet versus office visits; feline resistance; perception that regular medical check-ups are unnecessary; and cost of care. The **second phase** aimed to: identify any correlation between clinic revenue and pet visits; identify the use of successful practice tools; and establish the degree to which veterinarians are utilizing services identified in phase one of the study. The **third phase** of the study aimed to improve the veterinary care of cats by determining why cat visits were declining and helping veterinarians reverse the trend. It was conducted in two parts. The results of an online survey of 401 veterinary practice owners, which found cat care was key to veterinary practice growth, were released on January 21, 2013. The results of an online survey of 1,938 cat owners, which found half of America’s cats were not receiving regular veterinary care, were announced on July 20, 2013.

About Bayer HealthCare

The Bayer Group is a global enterprise with core competencies in the fields of health care, agriculture and high-tech materials. Bayer HealthCare, a subgroup of Bayer AG with annual sales of €18.6 million (2012), is one of the world’s leading, innovative companies in the healthcare and medical products industry and is based in Leverkusen, Germany. The company combines the

global activities of the Animal Health, Consumer Care, Medical Care and Pharmaceuticals divisions. Bayer HealthCare's aim is to discover, develop, manufacture and market products that will improve human and animal health worldwide. Bayer HealthCare has a global workforce of 55,300 employees (Dec 31, 2012) and is represented in more than 100 countries. More information at www.healthcare.bayer.com.

About the American Association of Feline Practitioners

The American Association of Feline Practitioners improves the health and welfare of cats by supporting high standards of practice, continuing education and scientific investigation. The AAFP has a long-standing reputation and track record in the veterinary community for facilitating high standards of practice and publishes guidelines for practice excellence which are available to veterinarians at the AAFP website. Over the years, the AAFP has encouraged veterinarians to continuously re-evaluate preconceived notions of practice strategies in an effort to advance the quality of feline medicine practiced. The Cat Friendly Practice program is the newest effort created to improve the treatment, handling and overall healthcare provided to cats. Its purpose is to equip veterinary practices with the tools, resources and information to elevate the standard of care provided to cats. Find more information at www.catvets.com.

About Brakke Consulting

Brakke Consulting is the leading consulting firm specializing in the animal health and nutrition markets. Headquartered in Dallas, the firm also maintains offices in Chicago, Omaha, St. Louis, Kansas City and Stuart, Florida, and has affiliate offices in Osaka and Sydney. Established in 1986, Brakke provides a full range of consulting services, including General Consulting, Strategic Planning, Mergers and Acquisitions, Market Research Studies, Technology Licensing, Communications Strategies and New Business Development. Find more information at www.brakkeconsulting.com.

Contact:

Staci Gouveia, Tel. 913.268.2577

Email: staci.gouveia@bayer.com

Lauren Dorsch, Tel. 913.268.2747

Email: lauren.dorsch@bayer.com

Find more information at www.animalhealth.bayerhealthcare.com

Follow us on Twitter: [@Bayer4animalsUS](https://twitter.com/Bayer4animalsUS)

Follow us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/healthcare.bayer>

Heather O'Steen, AAFP, 800.874.0498, Ext. 207

Email: hosteen@association-partners.com

Find more information at www.catvets.com

Forward-Looking Statements

This release may contain forward-looking statements based on current assumptions and forecasts made by Bayer Group or subgroup management. Various known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors could lead to material differences between the actual future results, financial situation, development or performance of the company and the estimates given here. These factors include those discussed in Bayer's public reports which are available on the Bayer website at www.bayer.com. The company assumes no liability whatsoever to update these forward-looking statements or to conform them to future events or developments.