

Ear Infections in dogs

Ear infection (formally known as “otitis externa”) is a common problem in dogs. It occurs when the lining of the dog’s ear becomes inflamed and thickened in either one or both ears. It is smelly, irritating and often very painful for the dog. Owners are often unaware that their dog is even suffering from an ear infection.



This study aimed to explore the frequency of ear infection in UK dogs and to identify which breeds and ear-types were most affected.

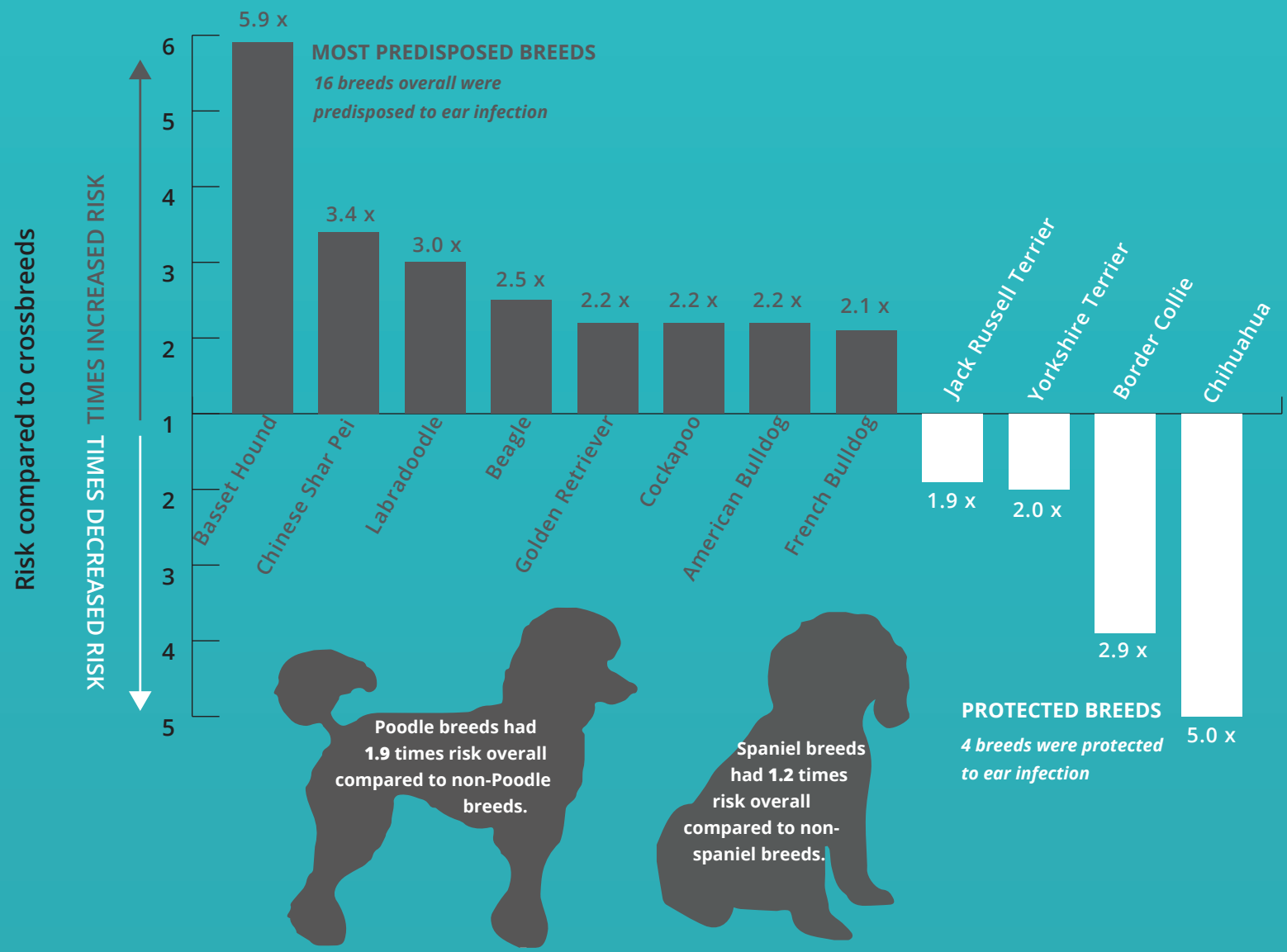
Number of dogs in study

22,333

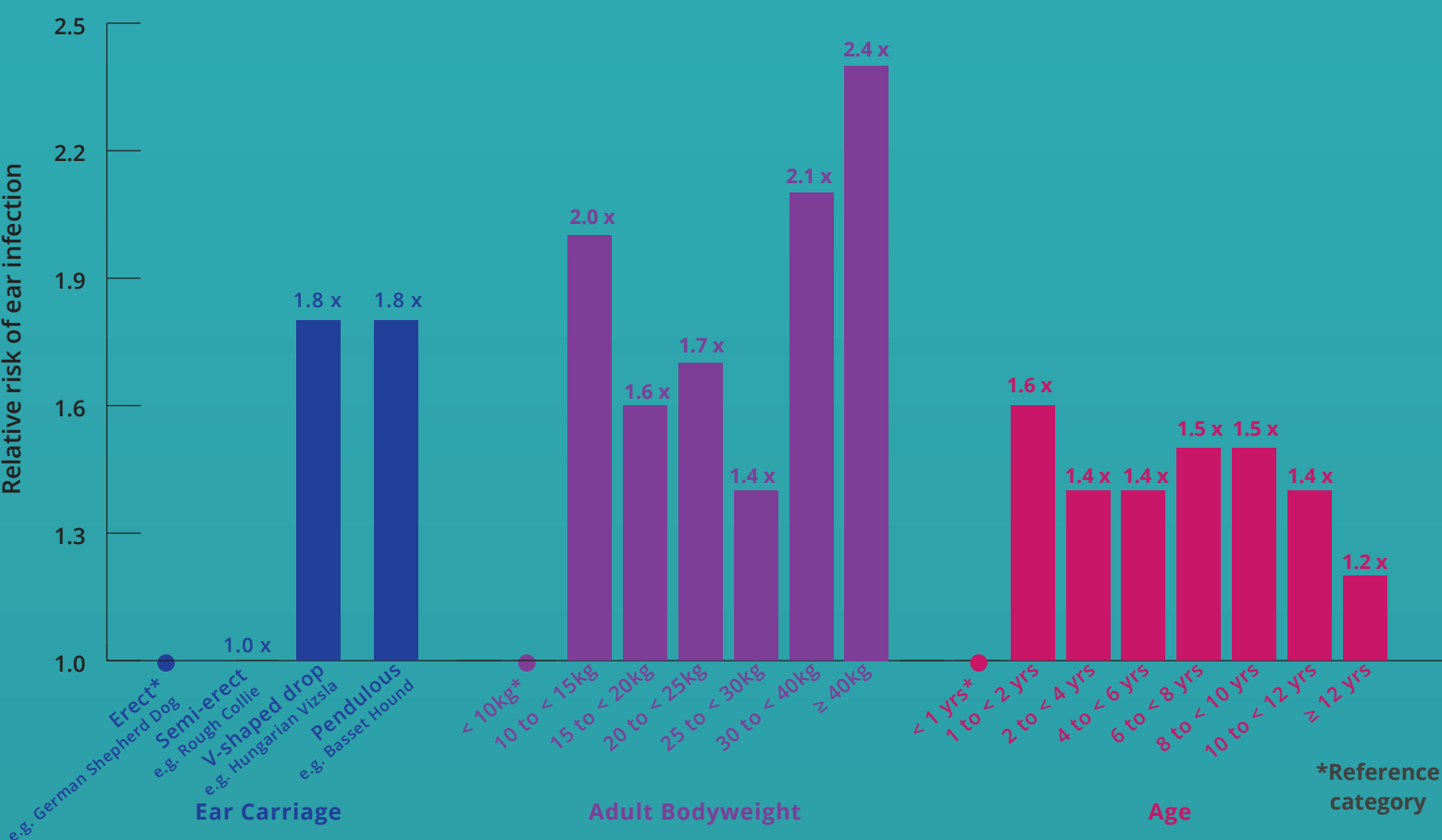
Proportion of dogs with ear infection each year

1 in 14
(7.3%)

Does the risk of ear infection vary by breed?



Other factors predisposing to ear infection



CONCLUSIONS:

Ear infections in dogs are very common. Owners should check their dog’s ears regularly and seek veterinary advice if concerned.

Owners can take preventative action by e.g. careful ear cleaning with a dry paper cloth, careful use of ear cleaners with antimicrobial properties and avoidance of overzealous ear-cleaning or ear-plucking.

Owners of high-risk breeds and ear types should be particularly aware of indicators of an ear infection e.g. head shaking and smelly discharge.

CLICK TO READ

O'Neill et al. (2021) "Frequency and predisposing factors for canine otitis externa in the UK – a primary veterinary care epidemiological view" Canine Medicine and Genetics

RVC VetCompass <https://www.rvc.ac.uk/vetcompass> carries out welfare research based on anonymised clinical information shared from over 30% of UK veterinary practices. We are very grateful to the owners and veterinary professionals who contribute to VetCompass research.