

AVIAN INFLUENZA

TEAMWORK PROPELS RESEARCH AND PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Although the Asian bird flu has not reached California, Veterinary Extension Specialist Carol Cardona, who is studying avian influenza viruses in wild birds, says research on the flow of viruses between wild and domestic birds will provide insights about the disease and help us prepare for its inevitable arrival.

Dr. Cardona, who is a spokesperson for the National Center for Animal and Zoonotic Disease Defense, is one of several faculty members—from the Wildlife Health Center, California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory, the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital, Center for Animal Disease Modeling and Surveillance, and other school units—working proactively in an intense national effort to address the threat of avian influenza with diagnostics, education, research and technology. She says, “We are creating unique ties with the UC Medical Center faculty and a fresh model for teamwork in public health.”



Nichole Anchell, staff research associate in Dr. Cardona's laboratory, candles eggs to check embryo growth in both inoculated and control eggs for a study of avian influenza viruses.

Terra Kelly, DVM, prepares samples for virus isolation. Dr. Kelly, who is working toward a PhD in epidemiology, studies avian influenza in domestic and wild birds.



Radiation Therapy

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The radiation oncology facility with IMRT capability for both small animals and horses was supported by the CCAH and the Center for Equine Health. The new linear accelerator is enclosed in a large room with six-foot-thick concrete walls and ceiling, and the treatment area includes a specially designed equine recovery room.

Selection of the linear accelerator was based on the machine's ability to deliver dual levels of ionizing radiation, which makes it possible to treat not only superficial lesions and those found in very small animals, but also deep-seated lesions in large animals or cancers involving significant amounts of bone.

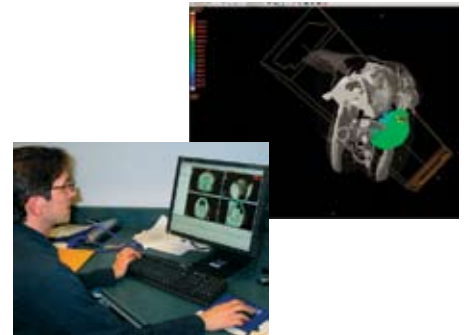
Client CT and MRI scans are directly accessible by the computers used to plan IMRT treatments. Some soft tissue detail can only be seen in an MRI image, especially with brain tumors.

For greater accuracy, a laser positioning system is used with both the CT scanner and linear accelerator. The scans can be merged in order to calculate radiation dosages.

“While being able to offer IMRT to patients suffering from cancer is a big step, it is just the beginning in our effort to provide optimum cancer treatments for animals,” says Dr. Théon.



Brook Jones, RVT, and Michael Kent, assistant professor of radiological science, prepare a feline patient for an IMRT session.



Dr. Kent utilizes software calibrated to the linear accelerator to create a patient treatment plan. The equine treatment plan (right) based on advanced imaging (CT, MRI), uses laser positioning to assure accuracy in delivering IMRT.

MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH

MPH DEGREE PROGRAM BECOMES ACCREDITED

The Master of Public Health (MPH) degree program at UC Davis received full accreditation in August 2005 from the Council on Education for Public Health.

The School of Veterinary Medicine, School of Medicine and the California Department of Health Services jointly run the program to train physicians, nurse practitioners, veterinarians and other health professionals.

MPH students learn to identify, prevent and solve community health problems, enforce laws, develop policies and respond to public health emergencies.

“There is a dire need for public health professionals in California and the nation, and

this is going to become more acute in the near future,” says Stephen McCurdy, School of Medicine professor and MPH program director.

Since its inception in 2002, the MPH program has graduated 21 professionals who work in government agencies, health organizations, advocacy groups and businesses.

Currently, students with professional health degrees may enroll in the one-year course. Educators are developing a future program for students without professional health degrees.

For more information, visit the MPH Web site (<http://mph.ucdavis.edu>).