Dr. Katherine Hansen Joins Radiation Oncology Service

The VMTH’s Radiation Oncology Service has brought on board veterinary oncologist Dr. Katherine Hansen, DVM, DACR, as an assistant professor. Originally from Tucson, Arizona, Dr. Hansen received a BA in biology from Carleton College in 2001 and her DVM from UC Davis in 2008.

Following veterinary school, she completed a rotating internship in small animal medicine and surgery at the University of Pennsylvania. She stayed on at Penn as a post-doctoral associate in radiation biology with an emphasis on nanoparticle development and hypoxia research from 2009 – 2011. Dr. Hansen then returned to UC Davis to complete her residency training in radiation oncology. At the 2013 House Officer Seminar Day, she received the award for Outstanding Small Animal Research Study & Presentation.

“We feel fortunate to have recruited Dr. Hansen to join our already world-class team in radiation oncology,” states Dr. David Wilson, director of the VMTH. “She has a bright future in academia, and we excited that she will be applying her talents and skill at UC Davis alongside Drs. Alain Theon and Michael Kern.”

Dr. Hansen’s research interest is in clinical radiation oncology with an emphasis on advanced radiation therapy and patient positioning. In her young academic career, she has already authored or co-authored several publications, including a recent article in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association on esophageal obstructions in dogs.

The addition of Dr. Hansen to the faculty comes on the heels of the acquisition of the VMTH’s new TrueBeam linear accelerator, a highly-advanced system to treat cancer with image-guided radiotherapy. The new TrueBeam system will allow UC Davis radiation oncologists to deliver more precise cancer treatments with pinpoint accuracy. This technology enables expanded radiotherapy treatment options for even the most challenging cancer cases, and offers VMTH patients the most advanced veterinary cancer treatments available anywhere in the world.

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“We are excited to be able to expand the services we can provide in small animal reproduction, fertility and genetic diseases by building upon the strong foundation established by Dr. Autumn Davidson over many years,” said Dr. David Wilson, director of the VMTH. “This expansion of small animal reproductive services has been a top priority since the addition of new faculty allowed us to replenish our Equine Reproduction Service last year, and will allow us to launch a comparative multi-species theriogenology resident training program.”

The Theriogenology Service will be led by Drs. Bruce Christensen (chief of the service) and Ghislane Dujovne, both board-certified in the American College of Theriogenologists, and Dr. Autumn Davidson, who is a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine and is recognized internationally for her expertise in small animal reproduction and fertility. They will work together with other board-certified specialists from the VMTH’s Small Animal Internal Medicine and Small Animal Surgery Services to provide routine and advanced reproductive care, including breeding management, insemination, pregnancy diagnosis, Caesarian sections and much more.

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CASE OF THE MONTH – ZOE

Zoe, 4-month-old female Mastiff, had a tough row to hoe from the very beginning of her life. Born the runt of a 15-pup litter, she experienced health problems at an early age. Born with an eye infection that left her blind in one eye, and within her first week, she had difficulty maintaining her temperature in the normal range. When she was adopted at about 10 weeks of age, her owner noticed Zoe’s inability to fully open her mouth, indicating that they have found it difficult to find veterinarians who can provide high quality breeding management services. We are happy to bring this much-needed service to our client and referral communities.

Although she has been with us for several years as a resident, I am pleased to welcome Dr. Kathy Allbright, who joined our faculty. Dr. Hansen’s radiation oncology training and experience will provide a welcome complement to the expertise of her mentors, Drs. Theon and Kent, as we continue to expand our oncology caseload and enhance outcomes with the most advanced treatments made possible.

Zoe’s CT scan was performed under sedation, her airway was intubated via the normal oral route, a transtracheal tube was placed for delivery of the inhaled anesthetic.

The surgery was a success. DOSS surgeons removed the entire area of bony fusion, along with some impacted adult teeth and remaining deciduous (baby) teeth. Following the surgery, Zoe could open her jaw about five centimeters. She spent the next few weeks exercising her atrophied jaw muscles by chewing on toys covered with peanut butter and cheese. At Zoe’s one-month re-check appointment, she was able to open her mouth almost nine centimeters, and continues to improve.

VMTH Clinicians Present at AAEP Convention

Members of the VMTH recently attended the 54th Annual American Association of Equine Practitioners Convention & Trade Show, held this past December in Nashville. With more than 200 presentations and discussions during 34 educational sessions, the AAEP convention is the largest gathering of equine veterinarians in the world. The convention allows equine clinicians, technicians, students and attendees to view and share the depth and breadth of their expertise across the entire spectrum of equine medicine. Making presentations at this year’s convention were Drs. Alejandro Guedes, Heathery Knych, Sarah Le Jeune, Jamie Prout, Sarah Puchalski, Nicola Pusteria, Susan Stover, Betsy Vaughan and Mary Beth Whitcomb. Their presentations covered topics such as pain management, chemical restraint, pharmacology, adrenal function, acupuncture, CT imaging, viral disease outbreaks, detection of salmonella, bone stress, ultrasonography, and marketing through social media. Additionally, a total of 17 former UC Davis residents and students gave presentations on a wide range of subjects. Current and former faculty, residents and students also serve the AAEP on committees, in leadership roles and in many other ways.

With our new state-of-the-art linear accelerator. As you read through this newsletter, remember none of the success stories would be possible without the hard work and dedication of our faculty, staff, residents and students. I commend you on your dedication to your “craft,” and want you to know that the fruits of the many hours you devote to the VMTH make a big difference in the lives of our patients and the people who love them.

Regards,

Dr. W. David Wilson, BVMS, MS, HonDACVIM
Director, William R. Pritchard VMTH

VMTH and Odetta are trained to detect low blood sugar levels. Using this test, UC Davis researchers and clinicians have documented that the two protozoan parasites that cause EPM—Sarcocystis neurona and Neospora hughesi—are much more widespread across the United States than originally thought. Our laboratory is the only one in the country that offers testing for both parasites. Promoting the hospital’s clinical and laboratory services at the AAEP trade show were: SVM faculty members Drs. Pat Conrad, Nicola Pusteria and David Wilson; Center for Equine Health Director Claudia Sonder; VMTH Clinical Laboratory Services Research and Development Manager Danielle Holt, PhD; and VMTH Communications and Marketing Officer Rob Warren.

As a world leader in veterinary medicine, UC Davis’ responsibility to discover and disseminate new knowledge is well served at national and international gatherings such as the AAEP convention. Active participation by our faculty, residents, students, staff and alumni provide but one example of the many ways we accomplish the school’s vision of leading veterinary medicine and addressing societal needs.

From The Director’s Corner

Welcome to the January issue of VMTH View. I hope everyone enjoyed a safe and happy New Year’s celebration. We start the new year with the announcement of new services, new faces and new equipment.

Following the re-establishment of our Equine Reproduction Service last year, I am pleased to announce the expansion of small animal reproduction service offerings in the VMTH. The initial response from breeders and referring veterinarians has been positive, with many of them indicating that they have found it difficult to find veterinarians who can provide high quality breeding management services. We are happy to bring this much-needed service to our client and referral communities.

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WILLIAM R. PRITCHARD VETERINARY MEDICAL TEACHING HOSPITAL • UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS

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Zoe was brought to the VMTH’s Dentistry and Oral Surgery Service (DOSS) in September of 2013 to have her jaw examined. Smaller than average for Mastiffs her age, she appeared stunted, and DOSS oral surgeons were unable to open her jaw at all.

A CT scan revealed a bony fusion of the left maxilla (upper jaw) and the mandible (lower jaw) at the level of her molar teeth, likely a result of an injury sustained as a puppy. Surgeons were hopeful this area of bony fusion could be separated to allow Zoe to open and close her mouth, and restore proper function of her jaw.

To help them plan for Zoe’s surgery, the DOSS collaborated with UC Davis biomedical engineers to create a 3-D print (model) of her skull, created from images taken during her CT scan. The 3-D print, an exact replica of Zoe’s skull, allowed surgeons to view the area of bony fusion from all angles before surgery, and develop a surgical plan prospectively, making Zoe’s actual surgery shorter and safer.

Whereas Zoe’s CT scan was performed under sedation, her surgery required general anesthesia. Because Zoe’s fused jaw precluded intubation via the normal oral route, a tracheotomy was performed and a tracheal tube was placed for delivery of the inhaled anesthetic.

The surgery was a success. DOSS surgeons removed the entire area of bony fusion, along with some impacted adult teeth and remaining deciduous (baby) teeth. Following the surgery, Zoe could open her jaw about five centimeters. She spent the next few weeks exercising her atrophied jaw muscles by chewing on toys covered with peanut butter and cheese. At Zoe’s one-month re-check appointment, she was able to open her mouth almost nine centimeters, and continues to improve.

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The VMTH also marketed its services with a booth at the convention’s trade show. This year, the hospital chose to highlight the IFAT laboratory test, a test developed and validated at UC Davis by a multi-disciplinary research team led by Dr. Pat Conrad and used to diagnose EPM, an important neurologic disease of horses. Using this test, UC Davis researchers and clinicians have documented that the two proteozoon parasites that cause EPM—Sarcocystis neurona and Neospora hughesi—are much more widespread across the United States than originally thought. Our laboratory is the only one in the country that offers testing for both parasites. Promoting the hospital’s clinical and laboratory services at the AAEP trade show were: SVM faculty members Drs. Pat Conrad, Nicola Pusterla and David Wilson; Center for Equine Health Director Claudia Sonder; VMTH Clinical Laboratory Services Research and Development Manager Danielle Holt, PhD; and VMTH Communications and Marketing Officer Rob Warren.

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Owner and Pet Look Out for One Another

Meet Odetta, a six-year-old Labrador retriever, who is trained to detect low blood sugar levels in diabetics. Odetta has alerted her owner, Kathy Allbright, to low blood sugar levels countless times in their four years together. Odetta’s keen sense of smell has saved Kathy from many potential episodes of hypoglycemia over those years. In 2011, it was time for Kathy to return the favor. She noticed a lump in Odetta’s cheek and a biopsy revealed a fibrosarcoma, an aggressive tumor. After surgery, which required removal of Odetta’s entire cheek bone, microscopic evidence of tumor cells remained. She would need radiation therapy at the VMTH to finally rid her body of the tumor. After 17 rounds of radiation over a 3-week span, Odetta was on the road to recovery. Now two years removed from the treatment, she is cancer free, and continues to help Kathy control her diabetes.

“Over the last few years, Odetta has kept me from the horrible episodes of hypoglycemia that I used to endure on a regular basis. During rapid blood sugar drops, Odetta wakes me when I am asleep, makes me pull over while driving, and stops me on hikes. I have not had one severe episode since our partnership in 2009. She is my guardian angel and best friend. She is my closest companion, my soul mate.”

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