

First Responder Dogs Given Clean Bill of Health

Some working dogs involved in study were at risk for a type of nasal cancer.

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A current five-year study that tracked the physical changes of 10 working dogs who were among the first responders of the 9/11 terrorist attacks has concluded that all the dogs are healthy.

Despite being at great risk, no signs of nasal carcinoma have been detected that can be directly linked to their work on or after the 9/11 attacks, according to the study, which is being conducted by veterinarians from Iams Pet Food and the University of Pennsylvania, with funding from the American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation.

“The dogs who remain in the study appear to be healthy and free of any nasal conditions,” said Amy Dicke, a technical services veterinarian for Iams Pet Food who for five years has monitored the health of the study participants. “While we have lost some of our hero dogs to old age and non-related health issues, the canine participants involved in our study have shown no signs of cancerous tumors that can be directly related to their work at 9/11 or other search-and-rescue missions.”

Like all search-and-rescue missions, the deployment after the 9/11 attacks required the dogs to utilize their keen senses of smell to identify the bodies of victims. It’s this sense of smell that made it impossible for the animals to wear protective gear, putting them at risk of exposure to potentially hazardous particles in the air.

High-tech, detailed MRI scans enabled researchers to peer into the dogs’ brains, sinus cavities, nasal passages, glands and other soft tissue to detect disease that may have developed. Once available only to humans, MRI is now a valuable diagnostic tool used by veterinarians throughout the United States.

The technology allows veterinarians to more accurately determine the cause and location of diseases such as cancer while avoiding invasive exploratory surgery.

For more information about the study, visit <http://www.iamspetimaging.com>