

Colorado State Recruits Arthritic Dogs for Study

Clinical study will test an herbal remedy's effect on pain and lameness from arthritis.

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Colorado State University is enrolling 36 dogs for a clinical study on the effects of an herbal supplement on pain and lameness associated with arthritis. The randomized, placebo-controlled, double-blind study will also investigate complications associated with herbal supplements.

"Dogs in pain often receive anti-inflammatory medication as a treatment," said Narda Robinson, DVM, director of the university's Center for Comparative and Integrative Pain Medicine. "There are concerns about the long-term side effects of these drugs such as gastric ulcers, bleeding, abdominal pain, and kidney or liver damage. Although many herbal manufacturers make claims that their product addresses pain without negative side effects, research supporting these claims — especially regarding how that research pertains to pets — is sparse."

The university is interested in enrolling dogs who, although lame, have not yet received any pain medications for their lameness. Dogs are eligible if they have clinical evidence of lameness in one or more limbs; have radiographic evidence of osteoarthritis in one or more joints in that limb; and bear significantly less weight on the affected limb, compared to the contralateral limb, as determined by force plate evaluation.

Dogs enrolled in the study will be seen at the university's Veterinary Teaching Hospital during a five-week period.

The herbal mixture being tested has been studied in humans and horses. Results show that pain has been reduced without known significant side effects, according to the university.