

Study Challenges Duration of Rabies Vaccine

Experts hope to demonstrate canine rabies vaccinations provide more years of immunity than current state mandates suggest.

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A study to research rabies vaccinations, funded by the Rabies Challenge Fund, is underway at the University of Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine in Madison by Ronald Schultz, Ph.D.

A leading authority on veterinary vaccines and the Chair of the Department of Pathobiological Sciences, Schultz will perform five- and seven-year challenge studies to determine the duration of immunity of the canine rabies vaccine. His goal is to extend the state-mandated interval for boosters. Schultz's studies suggest that state laws that require annual or triennial rabies for dogs are too redundant and that the vaccination confers immunity to rabies seven years after being administered.

"We are all very excited to start this study that will hopefully demonstrate that rabies vaccines can provide a minimum of seven years immunity," Schultz says. The rabies vaccination is the most potent of veterinary vaccines and can cause adverse reactions such as autoimmune diseases, anaphylactic shock, aggression, and seizures to name a few.

The Rabies Challenge Fund recently met its goal of \$177,000 to fund the first year of the study through contributions from dogs owners, canine groups, trainers, veterinarians, and small businesses. An annual budget goal of \$150,000 must be met in the future. For more information and updates on the Rabies Challenge Fund, visit www.RabiesChallengeFund.org.