

Tel no: 01223 337621 Fax: 01223 330848  
E-mail: [cardiology@vet.cam.ac.uk](mailto:cardiology@vet.cam.ac.uk)**Sudden death in young Labradors**

Dear Colleague,

There have been multiple reports in the UK and internationally of sudden, unexpected death in apparently healthy young Labrador Retrievers. Our Genetics and Cardiology teams are working together to investigate the underlying cause of these tragic cases, with the aim of developing a genetic test and identifying potential treatment strategies to help prevent sudden death in affected dogs.

We would be extremely grateful for your support with this important project. Your contribution is essential to the success of this investigation.

Please see below for instructions on how to submit samples for the study.

**Submission Protocol for Cardiac and DNA Samples from Labrador Retrievers with Suspected Sudden Death Cases****Please contact us prior to shipping:**Jose Novo Matos: [jms330@cam.ac.uk](mailto:jms330@cam.ac.uk)Cardiology service: [cardiology@vet.cam.ac.uk](mailto:cardiology@vet.cam.ac.uk)**Preparation of the heart:**

After removing the heart, flush gently with plain tap water, using a 10ml syringe inserted into the pulmonary artery, aorta, pulmonary veins and vena cava, to remove coagula from all chambers. Fix the whole heart in 10% neutral buffered formalin, at a tissue to volume ratio of 1:20, for a minimum of 24 hours prior to sending.

**Sampling for DNA:**

If available, please include a sample for DNA. This can be:

- Whole blood in EDTA
- Buccal swab
- A small piece of liver or spleen in a plain tube and frozen

Which documents need to accompany the sample?

Please include a copy of clinical history, as well as any previous echocardiography and/or ECG results, where possible/available.

Please include a copy of the pedigree certificate.

*Documents should be contained within the package in a separate sealable plastic bag or they can be emailed to us (please see emails above)*

Packaging instructions:

**Heart**

- Place the heart inside a suitable primary receptacle. This must be leak proof and strong enough to withstand shocks and loadings normally encountered during transport. Do not use glass containers.
- Screw caps should be reinforced with parafilm or adhesive tape.

**Blood and frozen tissue samples**

- Spleen or liver samples should be sent in standard plain tubes.
- Blood should be collected into and sent in EDTA tubes

- These samples should be placed into a rigid outer container. A hard 60ml syringe case or similar can be used if an approved container is not available. Screw caps should be reinforced with parafilm or adhesive tape.

#### *Secondary packaging*

- Place absorbent material, such as cotton wool, between the primary receptacle and secondary packaging. This material should be of sufficient quantity to absorb the entire contents of the primary receptacle, so that any release of liquid contents will not compromise the integrity of the cushioning material or outer packaging.
- The secondary packaging should be leak-proof, such as a sealable plastic bag.
- Each primary receptacle must be separate and individually wrapped to prevent contact.
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#### *Outer packaging*

- Secure the primary receptacles in their secondary packaging inside a sturdy outer packaging for transport. Outer packaging must be rigid, consisting of corrugated fibreboard, wood, metal or rigid plastic and must be appropriately sized for content.
- Please ensure this includes adequate cushioning material to protect fragile contents and limit movement.

*Styrofoam boxes, plastic bags and paper envelopes are UNACCEPTABLE outer packaging.*

Labelling the outer packaging:

Samples should be labelled as 'fragile-with care' or similar, as well as the text 'BIOLOGICAL SUBSTANCE CATEGORY B' at least 6mm high on the external surface of the outer packaging adjacent to the following mark, this should be clearly visible and legible:



The UN mark must be of sufficient size that each side has a length of at least 50mm, the width of the line must be at least 2mm and the letters and numbers must be at least 6mm high.

The name and telephone number of the person responsible for the sample must be marked on the package or provided on the airbill. The name and address of the shipper and consignee is also the 'person responsible', the name and address need only be marked once in order to satisfy the name and address provisions.

Transport:

Frozen samples do not need to be shipped on dry ice, as long as expected transport time is not estimated to exceed 48 hours.

Your collaboration is vital in helping us identify the cause and protect the future health of the Labrador Retriever breed.

With thanks and best regards,

Cathryn Mellersh

Jose Novo Matos  
Lisa Alves

Address:  
FAO Jose Novo Matos  
Department of Veterinary Medicine  
University of Cambridge  
Maddingley Road  
Cambridge  
CB30ES  
Tel: 01223 337621