

**BIOMEDICAL & VETERINARY SCIENCES
GRADUATE PROGRAM**



ANNOUNCES

The Master of Science Seminar and Examination of

Lauren E. Dodd

**“Feline Obesity: Food Toys and Owner-Perceived
Quality of Life during a Prescribed Weight Loss Plan”**

Friday, June 28th, 2019

10:00 AM

VMCVM 121

Bio



Dr. Lauren Dodd graduated from Tuskegee University School of Veterinary Medicine, then moved to New Mexico for a small animal rotating internship. Lauren performed a nutrition externship at VMCVM in 2014 and returned to complete a comparative nutrition residency. While performing her residency she completed her Master of Public Health in May 2019.

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Lay Language Abstract

Obesity is the most common nutrition related disease in cats. Feline obesity is associated with poor health outcomes such as insulin resistance, urinary tract disease, and hepatic lipidosis. Risk factors for feline obesity include middle age, neutered, decreased activity, and diet. Owner-perceived quality of life is an important factor for a successful weight loss plan. Poor perception of a pet's quality of life may result in owners abandoning the weight loss process. Food toys provide environmental enrichment, slow food consumption and may increase activity. The impact of food toys on owner-perceived quality of life and the success of a weight loss plan has not been previously investigated. Fifty-five cats were enrolled into the weight loss study and randomly placed them into 1 of 4 groups. Twenty cats were placed in the food toy group, 17 cats were placed in the food bowl group, 6 cats were placed in the food toy plus activity monitor group, and 12 cats were placed into the food bowl plus activity monitor group. Monthly flow-up visits consisted of weighing and body condition scoring each cat. In addition, owners completed a questionnaire to evaluate their cat's quality of life. Food toys did not influence cat owner perceptions of their cat's quality of life. However, cat owners perceived their cat's quality of life to be higher at the final study visit compared to the initial visit for all cats. Satiety was an issue

for several cats during the study. Low-calorie vegetables were offered to over half of the study cats to decrease hunger and food-seeking behavior. This study indicates quality of life is increased in cats undergoing a prescribed weight loss plan.

Presentations

Pet Food Quality: What Matters, Virginia Veterinary Medical Association Conference, Roanoke, VA, 2/2019

Effect of Personalized Weight Loss Plans on Weight Loss in Cats, American Academy of Veterinary Nutrition Clinical Nutrition & Research Symposium, Seattle, WA, 6/2018

Nutrition and the Gestating Bitch, Canine Breeder Excellence Seminar, Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine, Blacksburg, VA, 10/2017

Awards and Academic Achievements

Ryan C. Aday Award in Health Promotion, 2019

Outstanding Capstone Presentation, 2019

Examination Graduate Committee

Major Advisor/Chair:

Megan Shepherd, DMV, PhD, Diplomate ACVN
Clinical Assistant Professor
Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences

Graduate Advising Committee Members:

Kathy Hosig, RD, MPH, PhD
Associate Professor
Department of Population Health Sciences

Sherrie Clark, DVM, PhD, Diplomate ACT
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