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## FCoV-23 causing FIP in a cat imported to the UK from Cyprus

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**Detection of FCoV-23 virus causing feline infectious peritonitis (FIP) in UK following importation of a cat from Cyprus.**

Amanda Warr, Charalampos Attipa, Danielle Gunn-Moore, Christine Tait-Burkard

We would like to report a case of feline infectious peritonitis (FIP) in a cat imported from Cyprus at the end of August 2023.

The imported cat is a 9-month-old female cat who developed clinical signs (fever and ascites) compatible with FIP a few weeks after importation. The peritoneal fluid was a modified transudate with neutrophilic inflammation. Subsequent viral sequencing of the peritoneal fluid revealed that the cat was infected with a feline coronavirus (FCoV) that we have recently identified to be the cause of the large FIP outbreak in Cyprus; provisionally, we have named this virus FCoV-23. Unlike cases of classical FIP, which are not transmissible from cat to cat, we have evidence suggesting that FCoV-23 is directly transmissible from infected cats other cats they are in contact with <sup>1</sup>.

Sequence analysis of the viral spike gene of the FCoVs from the outbreak in Cyprus and the imported cat indicate they are closely related and a part of the same outbreak. Analysis of the viral genome sequence from cats in the Cyprus outbreak reveals that the virus circulating in Cyprus is a novel recombination between FCoV type I and a highly pathogenic canine coronavirus (pCCoV), with the spike gene of pCCoV replacing the spike of FCoV.

Following confirmation of FIP due to the FCoV-23, treatment in the imported cat has been initiated under the supervision of the feline medical team of the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, the University of Edinburgh, in collaboration with the local veterinary team.

Importantly, the imported cat is being kept strictly indoors and the owner has been advised to implement advance hygiene measures to avoid further spread of the virus. The cat is being treated with high doses of GS-441524, and faecal samples are being monitored for viral shedding.

We ask that all veterinary surgeons who see cats showing potential signs of FIP ask the owners about potential importation from Cyprus. If this is identified, we advise that the cat should be isolated from other pets, until antiviral treatment is started. Presently, it is unclear how long cats infected with FCoV-23 remain infectious for. As with classical FIP cases, if no treatment is initiated then the infection will result in the cat's death; euthanasia should be considered on welfare grounds.

We ask that veterinarian identifying potential cases contact us about these cats.

Although there is no statutory requirement to do so, the APHA's Small Animal Expert Group (SAEG) have been informed about this case. The SAEG works collaboratively to gather, analyse and share information on new disease threats.

Email address:

Contact [Christine.Burkard@roslin.ed.ac.uk](mailto:Christine.Burkard@roslin.ed.ac.uk) for queries about the sequencing.

Contact [Danielle.Gunn-Moore@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Danielle.Gunn-Moore@ed.ac.uk) for clinical and pet cat queries.

1. Charalampos A, Amanda Susan W, Demetris E, et al. Emergence and spread of feline infectious peritonitis due to a highly pathogenic canine/feline recombinant coronavirus. *bioRxiv* 2023: 2023.11.08.566182.