



EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

CAVSNET

COMPANION ANIMAL VETERINARY SURVEILLANCE NETWORK



**HELP US BUILD
THE BIG PICTURE
OF PET HEALTH
IN THE U.S.**



COMPANION ANIMAL VETERINARY
SURVEILLANCE NETWORK

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

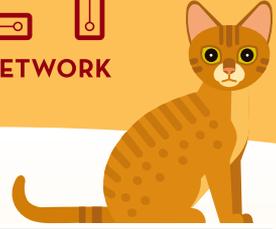


ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE
AND STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVE

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

CAVSNET

COMPANION ANIMAL VETERINARY SURVEILLANCE NETWORK



CONTENTS

PAGE

1	What is CAVSNET?	1
2	What information does CAVSNET collect?	2
3	Why is it important for me to take part?	2
4	How does CAVSNET help improve the health of the U.S. companion animal population?	2
5	Can I be identified from the information collected?	3
6	How is information collected by CAVSNET stored?	4
7	What do I have to do if I want to take part?	4
8	What if I do not wish to take part?	4
9	How will information be presented to the public?	5
10	How can information be seen?	7
11	Who will have access to data collected from clinics?	7
12	How is CAVSNET funded?	8
13	Who manages CAVSNET?	8
14	Has data collection been approved by an ethics committee?	8
15	What do I do if I want to complain?	9
16	How can I find out more about CAVSNET?	9

1. What is CAVSNET?

CAVSNET stands for the Companion Animal Veterinary Surveillance Network. CAVSNET will collect large volumes of information from U.S. veterinary practices. In the future, CAVSNET aims to collect data from diagnostic laboratories. By working together, we can better understand health and disease in companion animals. This project is based at the University of Minnesota.

CAVSNET is modeled after and developed in collaboration with the University of Liverpool's Small Animal Veterinary Surveillance Network (SAVSNET) program, which started in 2008.

CAVSNET's key aims are to:

- *monitor disease trends over time and highlight appropriate interventions*
- *identify populations at risk and monitor treatments and outcomes*
- *provide data resources for those working in animal health and welfare research*
- *improve general public awareness of companion animal diseases and prevention*
- *provide a route to clinical benchmarking for veterinarians in companion animal practice*

Your veterinary practice has recognized the importance of supporting veterinary research and has joined CAVSNET. This means that owners like you have the opportunity to get involved by contributing information about your pet's visit.



2. What information does CAVSNET collect?

The following routine information is sent to CAVSNET automatically and without the need for the veterinarian or technician to input additional data.

- *Species of your pet (e.g., cat, dog, horse, rabbit)*
- *Breed, age, sex, and weight*
- *Why your pet was brought to the veterinarian*
- *Notes written about your pet's visit*
- *Treatments, procedures, and testing done in the clinic*
- *Medications and other items sent home with your pet*
- *Zip code where the pet lives*

We do not routinely collect names of veterinary staff or owners, house numbers, street names, or towns. Occasionally, a veterinarian might write names, addresses, or phone numbers in consultation notes. These will be removed and are never used for our research (see Question 5).

3. Why is it important for me to take part?

Without the support of pet owners and participating practices, this project would not be possible. By participating in CAVSNET, owners and veterinary practices across the U.S. are giving veterinarians, owners, and researchers information they need to help improve the health and welfare of our pets.



4. How does CAVSNET help improve the health of the U.S. companion animal population?

The information collected by CAVSNET builds a picture of diseases experienced by our pets and where they occur in the country. This might also help us understand why some animals get sick and others do not. For example, is it their age or their breed, or perhaps where in the country they live that might contribute to why a particular pet is affected by a certain disease? Using the information collected, CAVSNET researchers and approved partners can:

- *produce outputs that will help pet owners and their veterinarians better understand, prevent, and control a range of diseases*
- *inform veterinarians of diseases that are of particular concern in their local area*
- *describe animal disease patterns over time*

5. Can I be identified from the information collected?

We do not routinely collect owner name, email or postal address, or the names of veterinarians and technicians. We only routinely collect the full zip code of where the animal lives, which is important to allow us to identify the location of where disease is occurring in the U.S. This zip code will only be available to CAVSNET researchers and approved partners (see Question 11).

For the vast majority of households, the zip code is not unique, so individuals cannot be identified. However, we are aware that in rare cases, there might be some zip codes with very few residences. Therefore, in order to further protect privacy, any publications from CAVSNET will not use the full zip code. Instead, we will only indicate where diseases are occurring at a lower resolution. By not publishing at the level of the full zip code, it will never be possible for others to identify who has contributed to CAVSNET.

We also collect the free-text consultation notes. These are used by your veterinarian or technician to describe the reason for the pet's visit, as well as any diagnoses and treatments given, and are extremely valuable to our research. Occasionally, identifiers like owners' and veterinarians' names, phone numbers, and addresses are written in this free-text (for example, 'please phone Mrs. Jones on 555-555-5555'). Software tools will be used to automatically remove the vast majority of these bits of more personal information (we call this de-identification). If, after this process, any identifiable information remains, it will never be used in publications or presentations using CAVSNET data and all data will be securely stored at the University of Minnesota (see Question 6).

We are also aware that certain breeds are considered 'rare' and owners of such breeds might be concerned about being identified. In order to address this, when producing reports, we make all reasonable efforts to lower the reporting resolution for rare breeds or animals, such that individuals cannot be identified.

ETHICS APPROVAL

CAVSNET has been granted ethical approval by the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board (STUDY00007110), deeming it "Not Human Research" and is exempt from review by the University of Minnesota Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. SAVSNET complies with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.



6. How is the information collected by CAVSNET stored?

The University of Minnesota is dedicated to keeping data secure. Data are encrypted in transit using secure http methods (i.e., https, sftp). Once the data have been received at the University of Minnesota, they are stored in a database on secure servers managed by the University's Health Science Technology Department. Databases are behind several layers of firewalls within the University of Minnesota data center.

In addition, in order to maintain a high level of security, information in its raw form is not allowed to be saved onto other portable devices, such as laptop computers, portable external hard-drives, or USB devices, unless it is encrypted.

7. What do I have to do if I want to take part?

If your veterinary practice has already decided to be part of CAVSNET, supporting important work being done to help improve animal health and welfare, you do not need to do anything new. Information will be collected automatically through the computer system by the veterinarian or technician interacting with the CAVSNET software (see Question 2).

If your veterinary practice is not already participating in CAVSNET, encourage them to join us.

8. What if I do not wish to take part?

If the veterinary practice has decided to take part in CAVSNET, there is no obligation for owners to take part in CAVSNET. If owners do not wish to take part, all they have to do is let their veterinarian or technician know before the end of their pet's consultation or contact the CAVSNET researchers. All of the information relating to their consultation will be excluded from the project. Opting out of CAVSNET will have no impact on the care individual animals get at their veterinary practice or with your relation to the University of Minnesota.

9. How will information be presented to the public?

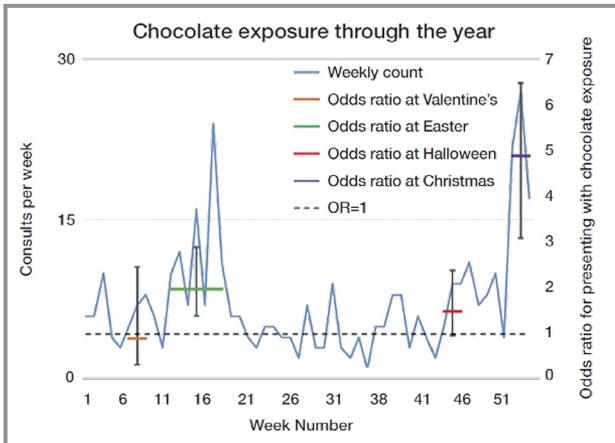
Information collected by CAVSNET is analyzed by CAVSNET researchers and approved partners. These researchers prepare scientific papers for the veterinary profession and wider scientific community and also communicate findings to the general public through social media, websites, as well as other media where appropriate (e.g., newsletters).

Anonymous data might be provided to supporting partners to ensure the financial sustainability of CAVSNET, thereby helping guarantee pets can continue to benefit from this research for as long as possible.

Examples of our research will be available at our website: <https://cavsnet.umn.edu>. See examples of how SAVSNET uses their research in the U.K. below and at their website: www.liverpool.ac.uk/savsnet.

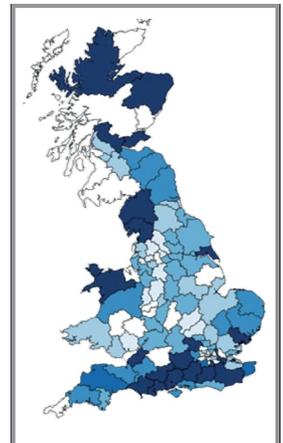
Weekly count of consultations where potential chocolate intoxication was discussed in dogs.

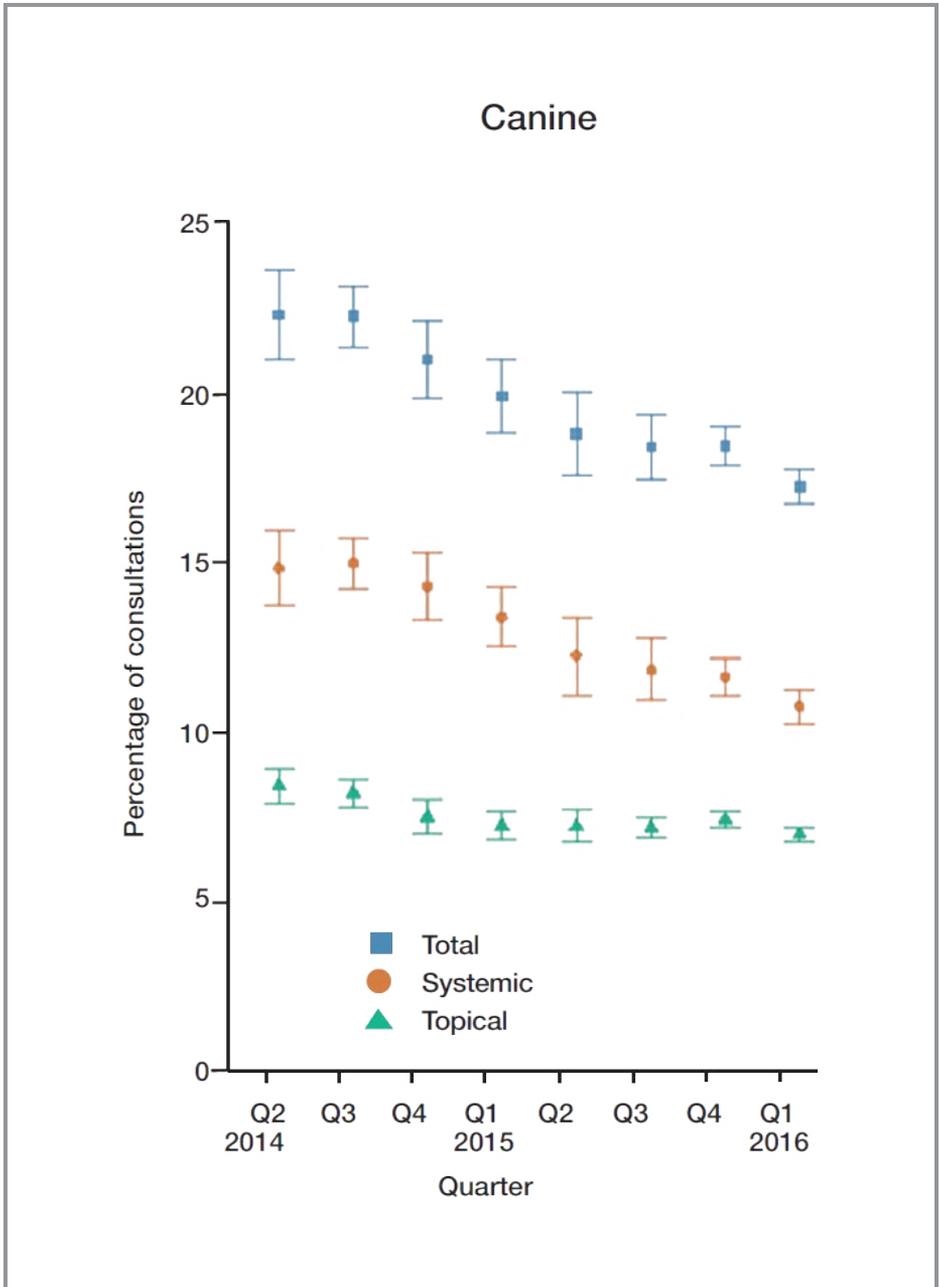
FROM VETERINARY RECORD 2017 181: 684



Geographical distribution of tick-based consultations in Great Britain between April 2014 and May 2016.

FROM EPIDEMIOLOGY AND INFECTION 2017 145: 10





10. How can information be seen?

Everybody can see anonymized summaries and open access publications of the information we collect on the CAVSNET website: <https://cavsnet.umn.edu>. These might include charts and graphs that allow you to see what is happening in the U.S. Individual veterinary practices, staff, owners, and pets will never be identifiable. We hope these outputs will help build over time into a comprehensive picture of companion animal health and disease across the U.S.

Veterinary practices are given access to a personalized online secure site called the CAVSNET dashboard, which allows them to explore the information they have provided to CAVSNET. This helps veterinarians and technicians better understand the diseases seen in their practice and how they can best help their patients. For example, a key feature of the CAVSNET dashboard will allow veterinary practices to compare, or benchmark, their antibiotic use; responsible use of antibiotics is an important issue in both veterinary and human medicine.

11. Who will have access to data collected from clinics?

Researchers in the core CAVSNET team based at the University of Minnesota will have access to the data. All other researchers can apply to gain access to the de-identified data only. All published data will be in summary form and anonymized. All data access is through secure login and/or encrypted data transfer.

All researchers wishing to use CAVSNET data for their research, regardless of their affiliation, need to apply for a CAVSNET data use agreement. This is a review process assessing the nature of the research to be done and identifying whether the findings would be beneficial to the veterinary profession, pets, and their owners. The data use agreement also ensures that individuals cannot be identified from any publication.



12. How is CAVSNET funded?

CAVSNET has pilot project funding through a University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine research grant and cooperative agreement funding through the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. CAVSNET continues to seek long-term funding through research councils, government, charities, and industry. Some of the work completed by CAVSNET might be used to generate income, for example, with pharmaceutical companies who might want to better understand how their products are being used by veterinarians in practice. These data are never provided in a way that would identify a client, patient, or veterinary practice. An updated list of our funders can be seen on our website.

All income, regardless of its source, is used to support the longevity of the project, so that the veterinary profession and pets can continue to benefit for as long as possible.

13. Who manages CAVSNET?

CAVSNET is managed by academics, researchers, veterinarians, and information technology programmers based at the University of Minnesota. As CAVSNET grows, insight will be received from an External Advisory Panel of colleagues from the veterinary profession, government, industry, academia, and the public.

14. Has data collection been approved by an ethics committee?

Yes. CAVSNET has been granted ethical approval by the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board (STUDY00007110), deeming it “Not Human Research” and is exempt from review by the University of Minnesota Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. SAVSNET has been approved by the University of Liverpool ethics committee.



15. What do I do if I want to complain?

If you are unhappy with any aspect of this project, please contact us by email or mail and we will try to help.

If you remain unhappy, or have a complaint which you feel you cannot communicate to us, then you should contact the Human Research Protections Program at 612-625-1650 (hrpp@umn.edu) stating the name of the project (CAVSNET) and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

16. How can I find out more about CAVSNET?

Visit our website for more information about the work we do: <https://cavsnet.umn.edu>

Learn more about SAVSNET at: <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/savsnet>

YOU CAN CONTACT US BY:

Emailing us:

cavsnet@umn.edu

Writing to us:

**CAVSNET, University of
Minnesota, 1352 Boyd Avenue,
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108**



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**Thanks for taking the time to
read this booklet and finding
out more about CAVSNET.**



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