

## **SYRINGOMYELIA NEWS      April/May 2007**

A research update

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The knowledge, experience and support of breeders and pet owners continue to play an essential part into the research for Chiari-like malformation and Syringomyelia.

### **Preliminary results of pilot study looking at the possible correlation between head shape and CM/SM in different toy breeds.**

In response to some observations made by breeders on head shape, a simple pilot study was devised. Dogs were selected on the basis of head length/breadth ratio, degree of doming and presence or absence of a ski-slope shape to the back of the head. CM/SM status was confirmed by MRI. Early results of this pilot study found no correlation, however the investigation is still ongoing. This study has been a tremendously valuable exercise in other ways. On the basis of head shape, some dogs had been presumed to be affected and owners had originally elected against MRI screening. However some of these dogs were actually found to be free of the condition. This suggests that it is not yet possible to predict CM/SM by a visual assessment of head shape. It also provided the opportunity to obtain blood DNA samples for the Genome study in Montreal\*. In particular, we would like to thank Lee Pieterse for co-ordinating the project in Australia and Sandy Smith in Canada who generously donated \$8000 from the 'For the Love of Ollie' Fund. An additional sum of \$4000 came from the 'Syringomyelia DNA Research' Fund and \$5,000 from a dedicated breeder making a total of \$17,000 so far.

**'For the Love of Ollie' Fund** and **Syringomyelia DNA Research Fund** is continuing to support the identification of

- i) SM clear lines of dogs in breeds where CM/SM is emerging
- ii) SM clear and affected dogs for DNA studies including association studies to help identify the gene in the more severely affected CKCS breed.

We welcome both information and financial support to continue this work. Donations can be made in a variety of ways [www.fortheloveofollie.com/](http://www.fortheloveofollie.com/) and <http://sm.cavaliertalk.com/> Donations 'Syringomyelia DNA Research'

\*The genome research aims to:

- i) Identify the gene/s involved in CM/SM and how they bring about the condition.
- ii) Develop better treatment strategies for affected dogs in all breeds.
- iii) Develop a genetic test to identify carriers for breeding purposes to reduce or eliminate the CM/SM condition in different breeds.