

Prevention and Education of Dermatophytosis (Ringworm) in Shelter Kittens

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Abstract

The purpose of this project was to try to reduce the amount of shelter kittens that are euthanized due to dermatophytosis, commonly known as ringworm, through education of the general public. By increasing awareness about this treatable disease we hope to prevent more kittens with ringworm from being euthanized.

Introduction

Kittens are being euthanized in shelters due to the prevalence of ringworm. This project implemented several ideas to help increase the adoption rate of these kittens. We created a pre-survey, educational pamphlet, and post-survey to understand the public's current knowledge on ringworm and to determine the impact that the pamphlet had on their original answers.

The primary issues with ringworm include:

- Transmission and contagiousness (Moriello, 2012)
- Cost of treatment (Ward, n.d.)
- The stigma against contaminated animals.

Mainly, too many kittens are unnecessarily euthanized due to ringworm when the infection is relatively easy to treat.



Figure 1. Kitten being treated for ringworm (lime sulfur dip treatment).

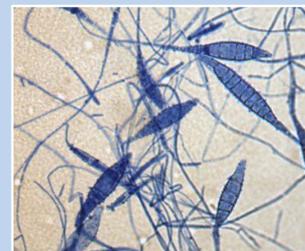


Figure 2. *Microsporium canis* (most common form).



Figure 3. Feline with ringworm displaying alopecia above right eye.

Methods

- Pre-survey distributed
- Introduced an informative pamphlet
- Post-survey distributed to measure impact of the educational pamphlet

Results

How likely would an animal having ringworm impact your decision to adopt?:

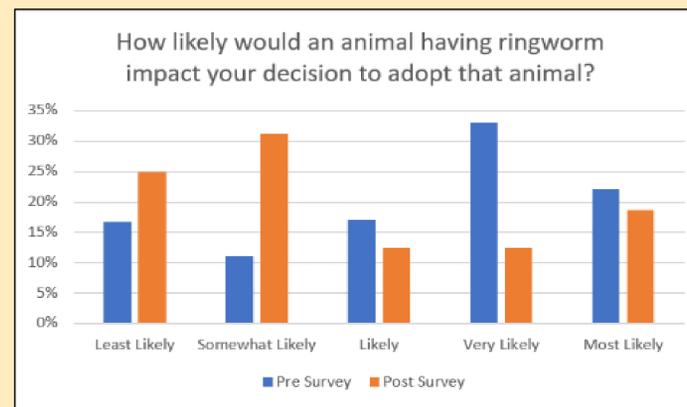


Figure 4. Results gathered from a pre and post survey taken by 17 participants in order to measure people's awareness about ringworm.

I know how to prevent and treat ringworm:

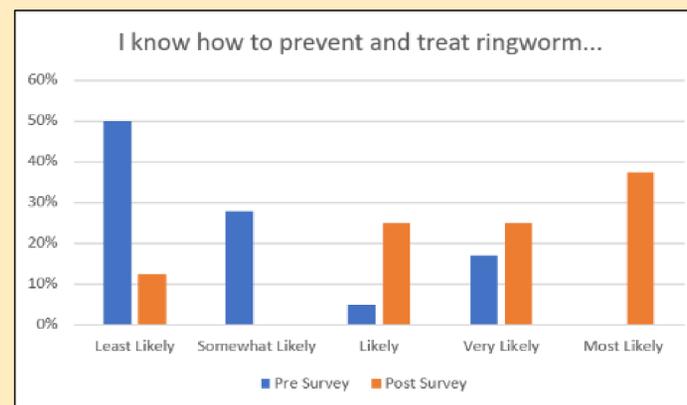


Figure 5. Results gathered from the same pre and post survey.

In figure 4 we observed the impact of an animal having ringworm drop. In figure 5 we observed an increase in awareness of how to prevent and treat ringworm.

Conclusion

The survey results showed that while the general knowledge regarding ringworm increased between the post and pre surveys, respondents are still reluctant to adopt an infected animal. This may be due to several reasons including fear of zoonosis, cost and time spent to treat the disease, and the persistence of stigma surrounding ringworm. The pamphlet most significantly impacted the awareness of how to prevent and treat ringworm. In this regard, the pamphlet succeeded in its role as an informational source. While this project's objective to reduce the stigma surrounding shelter kittens infected with ringworm showed positive results, further educational efforts are needed to fully eradicate this stigma.

Future Directions

- Design a modified air filter to capture and eliminate ringworm spores from the air
- Continue to educate the public

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References

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- Ward, E. (n.d.). Ringworm in Cats. Retrieved from <https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/ringworm-in-cats>