

PREVALENCE OF ALLERGIC DISEASES IN CATS FROM TIMIS COUNTY

PREVALENȚA BOLILOR ALERGICE LA PISICI ÎN JUDEȚUL TIMIȘ

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ABSTRACT | REZUMAT

Allergies are a common concern among veterinarians who deal with pets. The symptoms are frustrating for most owners, especially the recurrent character of these diseases, leading to an increased number of consultations on this matter and highlighting the importance of research in this field. It is of great importance to establish the prevalence rate of these disorders for the practitioners, to offer a greater picture of the extent of these conditions. The study was conducted on 172 feline patients brought for consultation in four clinics from Timisoara, including the Veterinary Clinics from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Timisoara. Sixty-two of the cats were purebred and 110 were mix-breed, 89 were males and 83 were females. The animals were also separated according to age in three age groups. The diagnostic of the allergic diseases was established using common diagnostic methods such as skin scrapes, cytology, culture media, Wood's lamp test, flea-comb test. The overall prevalence rate of allergies was 14.53%, the most common allergies being the flea-allergy, followed by food-allergy, contact allergy, and non-flea-non-food induced dermatitis. The most affected age group was 0.2-3 years, it was observed to be more common in female cats and among the purebred animals.

Keywords: feline, allergies, Romania, prevalence, cats

Alergiile sunt un motiv de îngrijorare comun în rândul veterinarilor practicieni care se ocupă de animale de companie. Simptomele induc frustrare majorității proprietarilor, în special caracterul recurent al acestor boli, care conduce la un număr crescut de consultații, subliniind importanța cercetărilor în acest domeniu. Stabilirea prevalenței acestor boli poartă o deosebită importanță pentru practicieni. Studiul s-a desfășurat pe 172 de pacienți felini, aduși la consultație în cadrul a patru clinici din Timișoara, inclusiv la Clinica Veterinară din cadrul Facultății de Medicină Veterinară din Timișoara. Șaizeci și două de pisici au fost de rasă pură și 110 au fost metiși, 89 masculi și 83 femele. Animalele au fost separate în 3 categorii în funcție de vârstă. Diagnosticul bolilor alergice s-a stabilit folosind metode de diagnostic clasice precum raclatul cutanat, metode de citologie, medii de cultură, testul cu lampă Wood, testul cu pieptenul special pentru identificarea puricilor. Rata generală a prevalenței bolilor alergice a fost de 14,53%, cele mai comune alergii fiind dermatita alergică la înțepătura de purici urmată de alergia alimentară, alergia de contact și sindromul atopic felin. Cea mai afectată categorie de vârstă a fost cea de 0,2-3 ani. S-a observat că alergiile au fost mai comune la femele și în rândul animalelor de rasă pură.

Cuvinte cheie: feline, alergii, Romania, prevalență, pisici

Cats present a unique clinical pattern in what regards the symptomatology of cutaneous inflammatory diseases. Cats will frequently exhibit at least one out of four most common characteristic reactions, indicating the presence of a pruritic, inflammatory condition, namely- head/neck/ear pruritus, excoriations, self-induced alopecia, miliary dermatitis or eosinophilic type-lesions (eosinophilic plaques or granulomas, indolent ulcers). However, these reactions are only part of a frequently encountered pattern and they cannot be considered as sole elements of diagnostic (9).

Thus, other elements of differential diagnosis such as the presence of parasites or bacterial infections, genetic or neoplastic conditions, should be taken into consideration when examining a potentially allergic feline patient (12).

Similar to the categories drafted for canine allergic patients, feline allergic syndromes are also included into three categories: flea-bite hypersensitivity, food-related hypersensitivity, and feline atopy syndrome. Most symptom-related traits are common to both dogs and cats in terms of hypersensitivities, except for the atopy syndrome which varies greatly in cats compared to dogs, constituting the reason why the feline atopy syndrome has been renamed as non-flea non-food induced hypersensitivity dermatitis (9).

Information regarding allergic syndromes in cats is

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scarcer than that referring to canine allergies. The aim and purpose of this study flow from this lack of information, namely, to bring a contribution for a better understanding of the extent to which hypersensitivity reactions are spread among the feline population in the western part of Romania as well as which are the most frequently encountered entities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to establish the prevalence of allergic diseases among the feline population from Timis County, we collected data from the patient record books of four clinics from Timisoara: Dermatology and Parasitology Clinic from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Timisoara, Salvat Veterinary Clinic, Dr. Sirbu Veterinary Clinic, and Dr. Ciolea Felician Veterinary Clinic.

The patients included in the study were all presented at the veterinary practices with their owners accusing symptoms that are consistent with allergic syndromes in cats. The study was conducted during the period 2018-2020 and it comprised 172 feline patients, of different breeds and age categories, coming from the city of Timisoara and various localities around Timisoara.

In terms of breed, the study included mix-breed cats and pure breed cats (Birman, British Short Hair Silver Tabby, British Short Hair Blue, Persian, Russian Blue, Siamese, and Siberian). The felines were included into 3 age categories: 0.2-3 years, 4-6 years, 7-13 years. The methods used in order to establish the diagnostic of the dermatological conditions were selected according to the general clinical recommendations for each condition.

Thus, the parasitic diseases were diagnosed using skin scrapes (deep or superficial) or by using the flea-comb. Fungal diseases were diagnosed by performing the Wood's lamp test, doubled by cultures on special media (such as DTM). For the diagnosis of bacterial infections (mainly otitis) and autoimmune diseases (such as pemphigus), we performed cytological exam (direct impression smears or adhesive-tape impression smears, respectively ear cytology). The feline non-flea-non-food induced hypersensitivity dermatitis (feline atopy) was diagnosed by firstly, excluding all other possible causes for pruritic diseases and based on diagnostic criteria specifically established for the diagnostic of atopy. For food-induced allergies, the animals were subjected to a trial-diet (using hypoallergenic diets) in order to help confirm the diagnosis of food-induced allergy (Fig. 1-3).

The patients included in the study are shown in Table 1, as well as their breed, age category, sex, clinical signs, lesion distribution, and dermatological diagnostic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS



Fig. 1. Notoedric mange in a Cat (original)

Fig. 2. *Microsporum spp.* in a kitten (original)

Fig. 3. Flea allergy in a cat (original)

Following the primary analysis of the results obtained from the study of the 172 feline patients (Table 1), it was noticed that 62 animals were purebred and 110 were mix-breed, 89 were males and 83 were females, 147 animals tested positive for diseases other than allergies and 25 tested positive for allergies (Fig. 4). The overall prevalence rate of allergies was 14.53%.

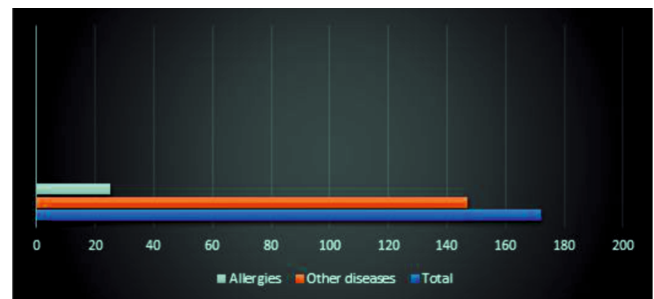


Fig. 4. Graphic representation of epidemiological results from cats taken into study

Breed

The breed distribution of the 172 studied cats was as follows: 62 (35.8%) were purebred and 110 were mix-breed (64.3%). The purebred animals showed a higher positivity rate for allergic reactions- 19.3% (12/62) while the common breed felines showed a 10.9% (12/110) positivity rate for allergies (Fig. 5).

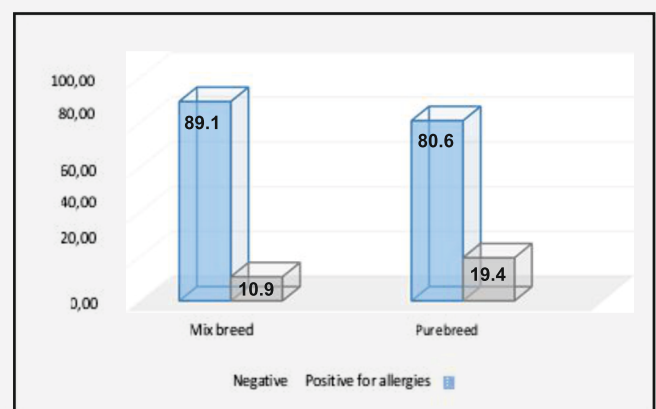


Fig. 5. Graphical representation of the prevalence of allergies in cats, according to breed

Table 1

Data regarding the feline patients included in the study

No.	Breed	Age	Sex	Clinical signs	Lesion	Results
1	Mix breed	5	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Ears	Mange
2	Mix breed	3	M	Alopecia	Limbs	Microsporum spp.
3	Persian	5	F	Pruritus	Trunk	Psychogenic
4	Mix breed	7	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Ears	Mange
5	Mix breed	8	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
6	Mix breed	9	M	Alopecia+Pustules	Trunk	Food allergy
7	Mix breed	3	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Ears	Mange
8	Mix breed	6	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
9	Mix breed	9	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
10	Mix breed	3	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
11	Mix breed	5	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Head+Trunk	Flea
12	Mix breed	9	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Presence of fleas
13	Mix breed	1	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Ears	Fungal and bacterial
14	Mix breed	6	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Ears	Mange
15	Mix breed	8	F	Pruritus	Ears	Mange
16	Mix breed	11	M	Pruritus+Alopecia+Crust	Head	Microsporum spp.
17	Mix breed	3	M	Pruritus	Head	Mange
18	Mix breed	8	M	Pruritus	Head	Mange
19	Mix breed	5	F	Pruritus	Head	Mange
20	Mix breed	7	M	Open wound	Head	Difficulties in healing
21	Mix breed	5	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Ears	Bacterial otitis
22	Mix breed	8	M	Alopecia	Limbs	Lick dermatitis
23	Mix breed	2	F	Alopecia	Ears	Microsporum spp.
24	Mix breed	9	M	Pruritus	Head	Mange
25	Mix breed	5	M	Pruritus	Trunk	Mange
26	Mix breed	7	F	Pruritus+Cruste+Eritem	Trunk	Food allergy
27	Mix breed	8	F	Generalized Alopecia	Trunk+Limbs	Cancer
28	Mix breed	2	M	Pruritus	Trunk+Head+Lim	Non-food-non-flea
29	Sphynx	1	F	Bullae+Vesicles+Crusts	Trunk+Head	Pemphigus
30	Mix breed	3	F	Pruritus	Trunk+Head	Flea allergy
31	Mix breed	5	F	Pruritus	Ears	Bacterial Otitis
32	Mix breed	6	M	Alopecia	Tail	Psychogenic alopecia
33	Mix breed	9	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Head+Ears	Bacterial otitis
34	Mix breed	3	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Head	Mange
35	Mix breed	7	F	Pruritus+Alopecia+Hema	Ears	Fungal and bacterial
36	Mix breed	2	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Head	Mange
37	Mix breed	9	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Head	Mange
38	Mix breed	1	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
39	Mix breed	7	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
40	Birman	8	M	Pruritus+Alopecia+Crust	Trunk+Limbs	Food allergy
41	Birman	9	F	Pruritus	Trunk	Presence of fleas
42	British	2	F	Pruritus	Trunk	Flea allergy
43	Siamese	6	F	Excessive licking	Trunk	Psychogenic alopecia
44	Mix breed	2	F	Pruritus	Head	Mange
45	Mix breed	4	F	Pruritus	Ears	Mange
46	Mix breed	4	M	Pruritus	Ears	Mange
47	Mix breed	7	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Ears	Mange
48	Mix breed	9	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
49	Mix breed	4	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
50	Mix breed	8	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
51	Siamese	9	F	Alopecia	Trunk	Hormonal alopecia
52	Siamese	7	M	Pruritus	Trunk	Presence of fleas
53	Siamese	9	M	Pruritus	Ears	Bacterial otitis
54	Siamese	3	M	Pruritus	Head	Mange
55	Mix breed	9	M	Pruritus	Head	Mange
56	Mix breed	5	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Head	Mange
57	Mix breed	7	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Head	Mange
58	Mix breed	2	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Head	Mange
59	British	1	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Head	Mange
60	Mix breed	1	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Head	Mange

Table 1

Data regarding the feline patients included in the study

No.	Breed	Age	Sex	Clinical signs	Lesion	Results
61	Birman	9	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Head	Mange
62	Mix breed	3	F	Ulcer	Head	Indolent Ulcer
63	Mix breed	1	F	Pruritus+Alopecia+Pustu	Limbs+Head	Feline Demodicosis
64	Persian	6	M	Pruritus	Trunk	Psychogenic alopecia
65	Mix breed	7	M	Pruritus	Ears	Bacterial otitis
66	Mix breed	8	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Head	Mange
67	Mix breed	3	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
68	Siamese	2	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Food allergy
69	Mix breed	1	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
70	Persian	6	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
71	Persian	2	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
72	Mix breed	8	M	Alopecia	Trunk	Microsporum spp.
73	Birman	4	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
74	Birman	9	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Head	Mange
75	Birman	3	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Head	Mange
76	British	9	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Head	Mange
77	Persian	3	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Head	Mange
78	British	1	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
79	Birman	2	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
80	Siamese	9	F	Subcutaneous nodule	Trunk	Abscess
81	Russian Blue	11	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Food allergy
82	Birman	3	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Ears	Bacterial otitis
83	Mix breed	4	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Ears	Microsporum spp.
84	Persian	6	M	Excessive shedding	Trunk	Nutritional deficiencies
85	Mix breed	13	F	Alopecia	Trunk	Hormonal alopecia
86	Persian	5	M	Pruritus+Alopecia+Eryth	Head	Non-food-non-flea
87	Mix breed	1	F	Macule	Head	Lentigo
88	Siamese	2	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Head (Neck)	Contact dermatitis
89	Siamese	10	M	Alopecia	Trunk	Hormonal alopecia
90	Birman	7	M	Scaling+ Crusts	Head+Trunk	Mange
91	Mix breed	8	M	Pruritus	Head+Ears	Bacterial otitis
92	Mix breed	5	M	Pruritus	Trunk	Food allergy
93	Mix breed	10	M	Alopecia	Trunk+Limbs	Microsporum spp.
94	Birman	2	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Food allergy
95	Mix breed	8	M	Alopecia	Trunk	Microsporum spp.
96	Persian	4	F	Pruritus+Purulent	Ears	Bacterial otitis
97	Mix breed	7	F	Subcutaneous nodule	Head	Abscess
98	Siamese	3	F	Alopecia+Erythema+Prur	Trunk+ Head	Flea allergy
99	Birman	7	F	Crusts+papules+Pruritus	Trunk	Contact dermatitis
100	Russian Blue	4	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Ears	Microsporum spp.
101	Birman	9	F	Pruritus+Purulent	Ears	Bacterial otitis
102	Persian	3	M	Pruritus	Head	Mange
103	Birman	1	F	Pruritus	Head	Mange
104	Mix breed	3	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
105	Mix breed	1	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
106	Mix breed	2	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
107	Russian Blue	2	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
108	Russian Blue	3	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
109	Birman	1	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
110	Mix breed	5	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
111	Birman	2	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
112	Mix breed	7	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
113	Mix breed	2	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Ears	Mange
114	Mix breed	8	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Ears	Flea allergy
115	Mix breed	2	F	Alopecia	Trunk	Microsporum spp.
116	Mix breed	1	M	Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
117	Mix breed	7	F	Alopecia	Trunk	Microsporum spp.
118	Persian	6	F	Crusts	Trunk, Head	Microsporum spp.
119	British silver	3	F	Alopecia	Head, Limbs	Microsporum spp.
120	British blue	0.2	M	Alopecia	Head, Limbs	Microsporum spp.

Table 1

Data regarding the feline patients included in the study

No.	Breed	Age	Sex	Clinical signs	Lesion	Results
121	British black	0.2	M	Alopecia	Head, Limbs	Microsporium spp.
122	British silver	0.2	M	Alopecia	Head, Limbs	Microsporium spp.
123	British silver	0.2	F	Alopecia	Head, Limbs	Microsporium spp.
124	British black	0.2	F	Alopecia	Head, Limbs	Microsporium spp.
125	Birman	9	F	Pruritus	Trunk	Psychogenic
126	Mix-breed	3	M	Pruritus	Ears	Mange
127	Angora	2	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Head+Ears	Mange
128	Russian Blue	7	M	Alopecia	Flanc	Hypercorticism
129	Mix breed	5	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Eosiniphilic plaque
130	Mix-breed	8	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Mange
131	Mix-breed	6	F	Pruritus	Ears	Mange
132	Mix-breed	5	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Head	Food allergy
133	Birman	3	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Flea allergy
134	Mix-breed	2	F	Alopecia	Neck	Hotspot
135	Mix-breed	1	M	Alopecia	Limbs	Microsporium spp.
136	Siamese	6	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Limbs	Psychogenic alopecia
137	Mix-breed	3	F	Pruritus	Ears	Mange
138	British	2	F	Alopecia	Trunk	Microsporium spp.
139	Persian	4	M	Pruritus	Trunk	Bacterial infection
140	Mix-breed	1	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Food allergy
141	Mix-breed	3	F	Alopecia	Trunk	Psychogenic alopecia
142	Mix-breed	2	M	Pruritus	Ears	Mange
143	Mix-breed	3	F	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Flea allergy
144	Birmaneză	14	F	Pruritus	Ears	Bacterial infection
145	British	0,9	F	Alopecia	Trunk	Flea allergy
146	Mix-breed	0,2	F	Pruritus	Ears	Mange
147	Mix-breed	2	M	Pruritus	Ears	Bacterial infection
148	Mix-breed	1	F	Alopecia	Limbs	Microsporium spp.
149	Mix-breed	6	F	Purulent secretions	Limbs	Bacterial infection
150	Mix-breed	8	M	Alopecia	Head+ Trunk	Bacterial infection
151	Persian	5	M	Alopecia	Trunk	Psychogenic alopecia
152	Mix-breed	3	F	Alopecia	Limbs	Microsporium spp.
153	Mix-breed	0,8	M	Alopecia	Trunk+Head	Microsporium spp.
154	Mix-breed	2	M	Pruritus	Head+Ears	Mange
155	Birmaneză	4	F	Pruritus	Head+Trunk	Food allergy
156	Mix-breed	1	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Limbs+Trunk	Flea allergy
157	Mix-breed	8	M	Pruritus	Head+Ears	Mange
158	Mix-breed	9	M	Alopecia	Ears	Bacterial infection
159	Mix-breed	2	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Head+Ears	Mange
160	Mix-breed	1	F	Pruritus	Ears	Mange
161	Angora	4	M	Pruritus+Wound	Head	Contact dermatitis
162	Mix-breed	3	M	Pruritus	Ears	Bacterial infection
163	Mix-breed	10	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Head+Ears	Mange
164	Persian	7	M	Mutilation	Tail	Psychogenic alopecia
165	Mix-breed	1	M	Alopecia	Periocular/Head	Bacterial infection
166	Mix-breed	3	M	Alopecia + Ulcers	Limbs	Pemphigus
167	Mix-breed	9	M	Alopecia+Ulcers	Head+Ears	Squamous cell
168	Mix-breed	3	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Ears	Mange
169	Mix-breed	8	M	Pruritus+Alopecia	Trunk	Flea allergy
170	Mix-breed	0,2	F	Alopecia	Head+ Limbs	Bacterial infection
171	Mix-breed	3	M	Crusts+ Alopecia	Trunk	Bacterial infection
172	Mix-breed	1	M	Alopecia	Head+Trunk	Microsporium spp.

The allergic diseases diagnosed among the purebred felines were flea allergy (6.45%), food-induced allergy/non-food-non-flea induced hypersensitivity dermatitis (8.06%), and contact allergic dermatitis (4.83%). The common breed cats showed the same dermatological conditions at the following: flea-bite allergy (5.4%),

food-induced allergy/non-food-non-flea induced allergy (6.2%), and none of them presented contact dermatitis.

Sex. There was a total number of 83 females (representing 48.2%) and 89 males (51.8%) from a total of 172 examined cats.

The positivity rate of allergic diseases in females was 16.8% (14/83) while in males it was 12.35% (11/89) (Fig. 6).

The distribution of allergic diseases among the female feline population of the study was as follows: 50% (7/14) positive for flea-bite allergy, 14.2% (2/14) positive for contact allergic dermatitis, and 35.7% (5/14) showed positive results for the diagnostic of food-induced hypersensitivity.

In the case of positive males, the prevalence rate of the various allergic diseases was: 27.2% (3/11) positivity for flea allergy, 9% (1/11) contact allergy, and 54.5% (6/11) were positive for food allergy.

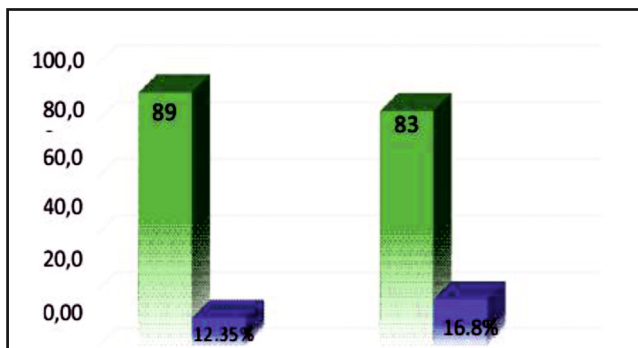


Fig. 6. Graphic representation of allergy distribution among the studied feline population according to sex

Age. Three age categories were established - 0.2-3 years (45.3%), 4-6 years (20.9%), and 7-13 years (32.5%). The age-related distribution of allergic diseases was as follows: 14.1% for the 0.2-3 years age category, 16.6% for the 4-6 years age category, and 12.5% for the 7-13 years category (Fig. 7).

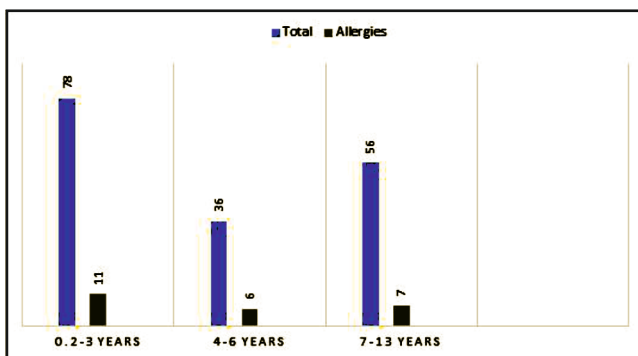


Fig. 7. Distribution of allergies among the studied feline population according to age category

Among the felines that tested positive for allergic diseases, 7 out 11 cats from the 0.2-3 years age category were positive for flea-allergy dermatitis (63.6%), 2 out 6 cats from the 4-6 years age category were positive for flea-bite allergy (33.3%), and also 2 out of seven cats from the 7-13 years age category were po-

sitive for flea-bite allergy (28.5%). A single case of non-flea-non-food induced hypersensitivity dermatitis (NFNFIHD) was diagnosed in the studied feline population, in an individual belonging to the 4-6 years category. Contact dermatitis was diagnosed in 3 individuals, one from each age category and food-induced allergic dermatitis was diagnosed as follows: 3 out 11 individuals from the 0.2-3 years age category (27.2%), 3 out 6 individuals from the 4-6 years age category (50%) and 4 out of 7 individuals from the 7-13 years age category (57.14%).

Lesion distribution. The distribution of lesions varied in the studied population, thus from the total of 172 cats, 80 showed lesions on the head (46.5%), 21 showed lesions on the limbs (12.2%), and 81 showed lesions on the trunk (47.09%) (Fig. 8).

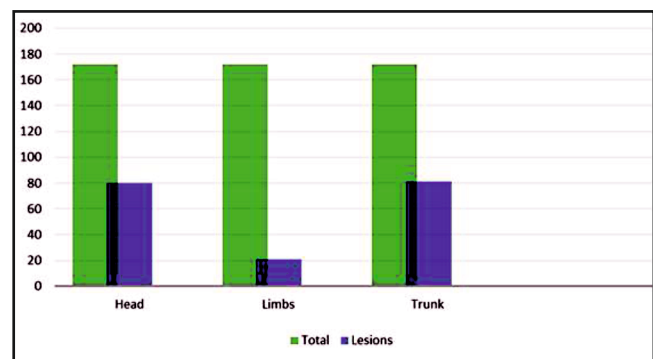


Fig. 8. Distribution of lesions in the studied feline population

The lesion distribution according to allergic disease was as follows: 3 out of 10 (30%) animals with flea allergy had signs on the head (and on the trunk as well), all animals with flea allergy had signs on the trunk and only one had signs on the limbs as well. In terms of food allergy, from a total of 10 animals suffering from this allergic condition, 2 out of 10 had lesions on the head (as well as on the trunk), all the animals showed signs on the trunk and only one had signs on the limbs as well.

The two cases presenting NFNFIHD showed signs on the head, trunk, and limbs while the three animals suffering from contact dermatitis showed signs on the head (2) and the trunk (1).

The exact frequency rate of allergic diseases among pets has always been a challenge due to various factors such as the selected diagnostic methods, geographical variations, absence of specialists in veterinary practices who can establish compliance of patients within the diagnostic criteria for allergies, especially in the case of atopy, consequently making the task of properly diagnosing hypersensitivity disorders, more difficult (5, 7). Most authors consider that atopy is at the base of most allergic reactions, considered e-

ven the starting point of flea-bite hypersensitivity which is ranked as the most common allergic disease among pets (top 3 most common diagnostics in both dogs and cats) (4, 11). However, hypersensitivity towards flea saliva in cats is a region-related disease (endemic character). Thus, a study conducted on 88 cats demonstrated that flea-bite hypersensitivity was present as a single condition in only 9% of all cases, however, 47% showed a combination between flea-bite hypersensitivity and non-flea-non-food induced hypersensitivity (10). The number of cats affected by this disease was significantly higher than in the case of dogs-22.28% of cats compared to 7.46% of dogs (2, 5, 10). The findings of the present study are in accordance with literature data, ranking flea-bite hypersensitivity on the top of the list of allergic diseases in felines. The exact incidence of food-induced allergies is difficult to establish however, one study conducted in Great Britain revealed a 7.6% frequency rate for this disease in patients that were brought for a consult in a dermatology clinic. Another study states that food-induced hypersensitivity disorders stand for 5% of all dermatological conditions and 15% of all allergic conditions (3). A study conducted on a smaller number of feline patients reported a 42% incidence of food-induced allergy in cats that show pruritus and gastrointestinal symptoms (8). Similarly, the data from the present study suggest an increased frequency rate for food-induced hypersensitivity in feline patients with dermatological conditions (40%).

Non-food-non-flea hypersensitivity rates vary from 1 to 6% of all feline dermatological conditions (1, 4). In the present study, only two cases were confirmed with NFNFIHD, suggesting a low prevalence of this condition within the feline study group.

CONCLUSIONS

The data offered by the present study are similar to those cited in the specialty literature, revealing a 13.9% overall frequency rate of allergic diseases within the studied feline population. The most commonly diagnosed allergic diseases were flea-bite hypersensitivity, food-induced hypersensitivity, contact allergy, and non-flea-non-food allergic dermatitis. In what regards the sex and age-related distribution, the most commonly affected age group was 0.2-3 years and in terms of sex, it was the females who proved to be more affected than the males. The pure-bred felines seem to be more prone to developing allergic skin disorders. Allergic diseases are a common condition encountered in feline patients, requiring proper diagnostic and treatment.

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