



# RESEARCH USING SAVSNET DATA

## DOGS WITH CROPPED EARS IN THE UK; A POPULATION-BASED STUDY USING ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS

Full paper published in the Veterinary Record available [here](#)

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### EAR CROPPING

Ear cropping was made illegal in the UK in 2006. Despite this, lack of import regulations and celebrity and media influences mean cropped dogs are increasingly reported. Those against ear cropping raise concerns that it may infringe a dog's freedom from pain, injury and disease and freedom to express natural behaviour

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### STUDY DESIGN

Clinical records from over 500 veterinary practices participating in SAVSNET between 6th October 2015 to 17th March 2022 were used to identify those consultations potentially associated with ear or pinna cropping/docking using regular expressions. This produced a final dataset of 132 individual dogs.

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### OVERSEAS IMPORTS

In 84 cases (63.6%), there was evidence of importation, most commonly from countries **where cropping is also illegal** including Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia, Spain, Poland and Ireland.

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### SEX AND NEUTERED STATUS

Of the 132 dogs that remained, 70 (53.0%) were male, 62 (47.0%) female. Fifteen (11.4%) were neutered (5 males and 10 females). Affected dogs were more likely to be entire (not neutered; odds ratio 11.04, 95% confidence interval 5.84-20.90).

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### BREED

Commonly affected breeds, the American Bulldog, Dobermann, Cane Corso, Bulldog and Mastiff, were all significantly over-represented. Several arguments exist in support of ear cropping including reduced ear infections. However, the breeds identified here were not breeds generally considered to be predisposed to such infections. Except for one pastoral and one utility breed, all cases were traditionally guarding or hunting breeds.

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### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are very grateful to the veterinary practices who submit data to SAVSNET making this research possible.

For more information on raising awareness of ear cropping, search for the **#cutthecrop** and **#floppnotcrop** campaigns.

I was acutely aware of the campaigns raising awareness of ear cropping and of various sources, including the RSPCA and veterinary practices, describing seeing increases in cropped dogs, often reported to be imported. SAVSNET can not only provide information regarding changing trends in the prevalence of cropped dogs in veterinary practices, but also useful demographical information which could possibly be used to identify the sources of these dogs and to provide targeted education regarding this procedure.



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