

Participant Information Sheet

Research Title: Veterinarian and breeder perceptions of deafness and hearing loss in dogs.

Lead researcher: Katrina Moon, PhD candidate

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Other researcher(s): Associate Professors Wayne Wilson and Joseph Kei, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences; and Doctors Erika Meler and Susan Sommerlad, School of Veterinary Science; The University of Queensland (UQ).

Ethics approval number: 2025/HE001293

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research project. Please read the following information about the project so that you can decide whether you would like to take part in this research. Please feel free to ask any questions you might have about your involvement in the project.

If you decide to participate in this research, please keep in mind that your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you do not have to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to stop at any time, and you would not need to give any explanation for your decision to stop participating. If you choose to stop participating, your data will not be used in the research.

Please download and keep a copy of this participant information sheet for your records. Your consent to participate in this study will be required prior to undertaking the questionnaire. Your decision to take part, or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with The University of Queensland.

What is this research about?

This study explores how dog breeders and veterinarians perceive and manage deafness and hearing loss in dogs. The survey aims to gather insights into breeder awareness, screening practices, decision-making, and any challenges faced when managing deaf or hearing-impaired puppies. The results will help guide future recommendations and the development of practical, evidence-based tools for the management of deafness and hearing loss in dogs.

What will I need to do?

If you agree to take part, you will be asked to complete an online survey questionnaire. The survey is expected to take around 20 to 30 minutes to complete.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

By participating in this research, you will be contributing to a greater understanding of how deafness and hearing loss are currently managed in breeding practices. Your input will help inform future guidelines, resources, and recommendations to support breeders, veterinarians, and ultimately, the wellbeing of dogs affected by hearing loss.

What are the possible risks and disadvantages of taking part?

This survey is anonymous, voluntary, and designed to be low risk. You will not be asked to provide any identifying personal information, and you can skip any questions you prefer not to answer. You may withdraw at any time before submitting the survey.

While it is unlikely, some participants may experience mild discomfort when reflecting on breeding decisions or past experiences. Additionally, the findings of this research may suggest changes to breeding practices that differ from or do not align with current approaches. If at any point you feel uncomfortable, you are encouraged to discontinue the survey or seek support if needed.

What will happen to the information about me?

The survey will not collect your name, contact details, or any identifying data. All information you provide will be kept confidential. Once a survey is submitted, Qualtrics (the survey platform we will use for our research) will assign you a unique ID (a randomly generated code) so that your responses will be anonymous and cannot be linked back to you.

The de-identified data will be securely stored on The University of Queensland's research data management platform for a period of five years. After this time, all data will be permanently destroyed. Only anonymous, grouped data will be used in publications or presentations. No information that could identify you will be shared.

What will happen if I decide to withdraw?

Your participation in this research is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time without needing to provide any explanation, and you will not receive any penalty or bias as a result of your withdrawal.

Participants may withdraw at any time by closing the survey window prior to submitting their responses. If you exit the survey before completion, no further data will be collected. Partially completed responses may be retained by the survey platform for up to one month, after which they will be automatically deleted. Incomplete responses will not be included in the final analysis.

Once you have submitted your survey, your responses are anonymous and cannot be withdrawn, as the researchers are unable to identify individual responses. Data that has already been analysed or included in aggregated results cannot be removed.

Can I hear about the results of this research?

Results from this project may be published in peer-reviewed journals or presented at relevant professional conferences. Publications will be accessible to participants through standard academic and professional channels (e.g., journal subscriptions, conference proceedings, or institutional repositories). Participants who wish to receive a summary of the research findings may send a separate email request to the lead researcher, Katrina Moon, at katrina.moon@student.uq.edu.au. Upon completion of the study, a general summary of the results will be shared with those who have requested it. This summary will not include any information that could identify individual participants or any other personally identifiable data.

Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?

Questions about the nature of this project and participation in it should be directed to the research team (see top of information sheet for details).

This study adheres to the principles of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. The study has received ethics approval in accordance with the review processes of The University of Queensland. You are free to discuss concerns regarding this study or your participation in it with the research team, but if you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the Human Research Ethics Team via email

humanethics@research.uq.edu.au or phone- see contact details at: <https://research-support.uq.edu.au/research-support/ethics-integrity-compliance/contacts>