

Papillon Club of America Health & Genetics



GENETIC RESEARCH CURRENTLY BEING DONE

By Leona Domino

Note : You do NOT need to be a member of PCA to help with this research. I would like to inform any Papillon owner about genetic/research information to anyone interested in helping our Papillon. Should you encounter the eye disease PRA, (Progressive retinal atrophy) and have a dog that is either blind or going blind, then you will be able to help with the research project of the Papillon Club of America (PCA).

PRA is an inherited disease that is in the gene pool of dozens of breeds and each breed has a specific set of markers for this disease. Dogs with prcd-form of PRA will become obvious with the examination of the retina, generally by 3-5 years of age. It has been recognized as late as 9-10 years however. Of course the dog has been bred by this time therefore the disease is being perpetuated without the breeders knowledge. Carriers of the disease can remain hidden for generations, thereby increasing the likelihood of spreading blindness.
WE NEED A TEST for this disease.

In order to develop PRA, a dog inherits two copies of the defective gene: one from its dam, one from its sire. The parents may be normal eyed in appearance. Two of these genes in a dog causes the disease. There is no treatment, no cure, and no way to stop it short of a test for the genetic trait. In order to find the markers for the disease in Papillons, the PCA has entered into a research contract with Dr. Simon Petersen-Jones of Michigan State University. The PCA has given \$11,300 this year and another similar amount is to be given next year. If you have a dog that has been diagnosed with PRA (this is why we need to have our dogs periodically examined by a Veterinarian Ophthalmologist) then you can help with Dr. Petersen-Jones research and the PCA will be indebted to you.

**ALL SAMPLES SUBMITTED FOR RESEARCH ARE CONFIDENTIAL.
NO COMMITTEE MEMBER WILL KNOW ABOUT ANY SAMPLES OR THE RESULTS OF THE TESTS**

CHECK SWABS :

Cheek swabs can be sent (need four cheek swabs per dog) as a second choice. Blood offers better quality of DNA. However the bottom line is getting a cheek swab from an important dog is much better than getting no sample. If you wish cheek swabs and information on how to send these samples, write to :

*Dr. Petersen-Jones (PRA Research)
Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences
Michigan State University
D-208 Veterinary Medical Center
East Lansing, MI 48824*

E-mail : peter315@cvm.msu.edu

What Dr. Jones needs are blood samples from affected dogs (dogs WITH the disease), siblings, parents and/or offspring of the affected dogs. In other words dogs directly related to the affected dog. He will be looking at these samples and trying to discover the gene markers responsible for the disease

If the source is found, there will then be a test developed for all the Papillons that will prove the dog to be clear, affected OR a carrier. You need NOT be a member of the Papillon Club of America. In fact anyone confronting this debilitating disease that is able to contribute blood to the research project will be giving invaluable data to help eliminate PRA in our Papillons.