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EDITOR'S LETTER

Embracing the Beauty of Change

Autumn is a great time to open our minds to learning as we do for the changing season. With the fall season upon us, we can take the opportunity to curl up in a favorite blanket with our cat, dog, bird, or iguana and read the *Today's Veterinary Nurse* Fall issue to learn a new technique for a skill or revisit one that we have not performed in a while! This issue covers the latest information veterinary nurses need to know about the ongoing [avian influenza outbreak](#) (p. 10) and the risk of [MDR1 mutations in our feline patients](#) (p. 70). There is also a much-needed discussion on how [exercise is crucial to managing weight](#) in our patients (p. 38). Embrace the beauty that is autumn. Your knowledge and skill set will be better for it, and your patients will benefit. Change, like the autumn leaves, can be glorious!

WHAT WE'RE READING

A member of our Editorial Advisory Board shares a recent open-access publication, including their key takeaways and its practical conclusion.

Efficacy, Safety, and Vaccine Response in Dogs Treated with Ilunocitinib (Zenrelia)

Forster S, Trout CM, Despa S, Boegel A, Berger D, King S. *Vet Dermatol*.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/vde.13344>

Fent GM, Jacela J, Plazola-Ortiz R, et al. *BMC Vet Res*.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12917-025-04929-z>

Fent GM, Despa S, Gabor L, et al. *BMC Vet Res*.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12917-025-04896-5>

WHAT WAS INVESTIGATED? In follow-up to an initial safety trial, 2 studies evaluated ilunocitinib, a Janus kinase (JAK) inhibitor, for its ability to control pruritus and skin lesions in client-owned dogs with canine atopic dermatitis (CAD) and its effect on immune response to core booster vaccinations when given at up to 3 times the recommended dose.

WHAT WAS DISCUSSED?

- **Efficacy in CAD:** In a 112-day, multicenter, placebo-controlled trial, 83% of ilunocitinib-treated dogs achieved $\geq 50\%$ improvement in pruritus or lesion scores by day 28 versus 31% of placebo dogs. Rapid improvement in pruritus was seen as early as day 2, and clinical remission occurred in approximately 67% of treated dogs by day 112.
- **Safety:** Ilunocitinib was generally well tolerated. Most adverse events were mild and involved skin or gastrointestinal signs; laboratory changes were small and

clinically insignificant. Serious adverse events were rare and unrelated to treatment.

- **Vaccination response:** In a prospective, noninferiority trial, dogs received ilunocitinib at 1 times or 3 times the label dose for 56 days, with core booster vaccinations (CDV [distemper], CPV [parvovirus], CAV-2 [adenovirus type 2], and rabies) administered 28 days after treatment initiation. Antibody titers measured at 15 and 28 days postvaccination showed no significant differences between treated and untreated controls. All dogs maintained titers above protective thresholds for rabies, CAV-2, and CPV throughout the study; CDV titers remained comparable to controls at all time points. Mild gastrointestinal or skin abnormalities were observed, consistent with expected background findings for JAK inhibitor therapy, and all dogs remained clinically healthy.
- **Clinical context:** These results help address concerns about using immune-modulating drugs like JAK inhibitors in dogs requiring routine vaccinations, supporting their safety even at doses up to triple the therapeutic level.

TAKE-HOME POINTS

- Ilunocitinib provides rapid, sustained control of CAD signs with a favorable safety profile.
 - Treatment at up to 3 times the label dose did not impair protective antibody responses to core booster vaccines.
 - For veterinary teams, this supports the continued use of ilunocitinib in appropriately vaccinated dogs, with routine monitoring for mild skin or gastrointestinal effects.
- Jennie Tait, AHT, RVT, VTS (Dermatology) Charter Member