

Cat Health Concerns in Other Countries

See what veterinarians in Greece and France say are the greatest health concerns for cats living there compared to cats in the United States.

By Mary Anne Miller

Life-threatening and complex feline conditions present concerns for cat owners and veterinarians worldwide. In France, Greece and the United States, some cat health concerns are shared, while others are unique to the particular country.

Cat Health Concerns in France

Chronic Renal Failure (CRF) is one of the top health concerns in France, says Jean-Claude Proy, professor at the Veterinary School of Lyon, France. Found primarily among senior cats, CRF gradually shuts down the kidneys as the aging process advances.

High Rise Syndrome is a top health concern in France because many windows do not have screens.

Another top health concern for cats in France is High Rise Syndrome, according to Proy. High Rise Syndrome is the phenomenon that occurs when scents or movements outside entice curious cats to leap out of open windows. In France, screened windows are a rarity. Although cat owners are encouraged to place grids across open windows, those who do not heed this advice quickly discover their error. Even if cats jump from lower-level windows, they can sustain grievous injuries.

Cat Health Concerns in Greece

Treating flea allergic dermatitis, atopic dermatitis and food allergies are top health concerns in Greece, according to Emmanouil Saridomichelakis, DVM, professor at the Clinic of Internal Veterinary Medicine at the Aristotle University in Thessaloniki, Greece.

Dermatitis is “produced by a myriad of agents, including external irritants, burns, allergens, trauma and bacterial and parasitic invasion. The first sign is scratching, followed by skin lesions,” according to the Merck Veterinary Manual. These lesions, if left untreated, can become infected. Parasitic invasion is frequent because cats in Greece usually have constant outdoor access, Saridomichelakis says.

Atopic Dermatitis appears when the cat has inhaled a bacterial agent found in the environment. Merck states that “atopic animals will often chew at their feet and axillae.” The axillae refer to the area underneath cats’ legs.

Veterinarians in Greece also battle behavioral problems, Saridomichelakis says. Cats receiving treatment or examination sometimes act aggressively toward staff members and owners. Inappropriate elimination is another pressing issue for his clients.

Cat Health Concerns in the United States

Obesity is the number one preventable health concern in the United States, according to Marla McGeorge, DVM, with The Cat Doctor Clinic in Portland, Ore. Proy and Saridomichelakis share a concern for feline obesity because it can lead to other major health issues such as: constipation, obstruction, diabetes and heart disease.

“The vast majority of cats under one year of age are obese,” McGeorge says. “Playing a role in this obesity, after a cat is spayed or neutered, the cat’s metabolism changes. No longer requiring large amounts of food, free-feeding (the way most cat owners feed) becomes the cat’s enemy to his health and well-being.”

Other leading feline health concerns for the United States are the viral diseases:

- Feline Panleukopenia Virus (FPV)
- Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV)
- Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)
- Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP)

Your veterinarian can complete a case history form, download research, and communicate with other specialists within the field thanks to the technology that the Internet offers. This helps set the standard in promoting collaboration in veterinary medicine worldwide. As global communication increases, so does the hope that these feline health concerns will be eradicated.

Mary Anne Miller is a freelance writer and member of The Cat Writers' Association. She lives in Oregon with her husband, her cats, dogs and horses. View her latest work.

In February's CAT FANCY:

See what advice veterinarians around the world have on how to help a cat that is scared of veterinary visits.