

## Mountain Lion Receives Stem Cell Therapy

**A six-person veterinary team performs the procedure on big cat in Colorado.**

Posted: Jan. 23, 2009, 3 a.m. EST

Elissa, 23, received regenerative stem cell therapy because of osteoarthritis in both of her elbows. A 23-year-old feline named Elissa became the first mountain lion to receive stem cell therapy when Peak Performance Veterinary Group of Colorado Springs, Colo., recently performed regenerative stem cell therapy on her.

Elissa, the oldest mountain lion in protective care (She's at Catamount Creek Rescue in Florissant, Colo.), successfully received RSCT injections from a team of six individuals. The crew, which consisted of four veterinarians, a veterinary technician specialist in anesthesia and an assistant, headed to the Rocky Mountains to perform the on-site procedure under the direction of Dr. James Gaynor of the veterinary group.

Since Elissa was rescued 12 years ago from an environment where she had been declawed and put on photography exhibition, she has been under the care of Chris Oldham. The big cat's activity and comfort level started to decline because of osteoarthritis in both elbows.

Gaynor has performed numerous successful regenerative stem cell therapy procedures on canines. Though confident in the therapy and procedure method, he said, "The typical case for RSCT is an arthritic dog. Regenerative stem cell therapy is still an unexplored area of veterinary medicine when it comes to wildlife."

Peak Performance Veterinary Group performs approximately 25 percent of canine regenerative stem cell therapy procedures in the United States. Gaynor added that while he is hopeful for a positive outcome for Elissa, it will take time to measure the results.

Elissa was sedated during the process, and her blood pressure, heart and respiratory rate were monitored.