

V-BTA Test and it's Application to Transitional Cell Carcinoma of the Bladder

By Susan Kenney

Transitional cell cancer (TCC, bladder cancer) is the leading cause of cancer deaths in Scottish Terriers (STCA Health Trust Survey, 2005). It is often not found until late in the progression of the disease when the dog is either passing blood in the urine or is having trouble passing urine at all. TCC often occurs in what is called the Trigone area of the bladder, which is a region where the ureters (tubes) bring urine from the kidneys into the bladder and where urine passes out of the bladder. TCC is most often diagnosed following observation of the animal straining and/or passing only small amounts of urine, as the tumor obstructs free passage. To help in the diagnosis of TCC, there is a new test that is available. This test, termed V-BTA (bladder tumor analytes) is made by Alidex Inc., Redmond, Wa. Analytes are proteins produced by tumor cells, shed and released into the urine. The V-BTA test screens for tumor produced analytes. It is a simple "yes" or "no" test analogous to results obtained from such over the counter screenings as pregnancy tests provide. This test has a 90% accuracy in detecting TCC. Unfortunately, a 90% accuracy means the test may miss 10% of cases of TCC. The cost of each test is approximately \$60. V-BTA is yet another tool now available. Up to date Ultrasound machines can detect tumors approximately 4-5 mm (millimeters) in size or larger. Smaller tumors can also be missed using ultrasound as a screening method. Detection of TCC prior to symptoms allows treatment in the earlier stages of the disease. Ultimately, a tumor biopsy confirms diagnosis. Owners of Scottish Terriers may consider available screening methods in dogs that have parents, siblings or close relatives that have developed bladder cancer.

STCA Health trust Survey, 2005 <http://clubs.akc.org.stca>