

MAF study finds tramadol ineffective against osteoarthritis in dogs

Results showed no improvement when administered compared to either baseline or placebo

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[1]

A report funded by the Morris Animal Foundation (MAF) out of the University of Georgia has found tramadol to be ineffective in alleviating signs of pain associated with osteoarthritis in dogs.

“The data shows conclusively that tramadol is not an effective drug in treating the pain associated with arthritis in the dog, despite its common recommendation,” said Steven Budsberg, DVM, BS, MS, DACVS, professor of surgery/director of clinical research at the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine. “This use of tramadol is a classic example of failing to acknowledge and control for bias when evaluating a potential treatment.”

The reported data was collected by Dr. Budsberg and his research team via a randomized, blinded, placebo, and positive-controlled crossover study. The group compared tramadol against both placebo and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, with dogs afflicted with osteoarthritis of the elbow or knee assigned to receive each of three treatments in a random order and each treatment arm lasting for 10 days. Improvement was measured using a variety of tests to evaluate the patient’s gait and pain.

The results showed no improvement when tramadol was administered compared to either baseline or placebo.

“This study reinforces the need to carefully and systematically evaluate a pain medication’s effectiveness before it becomes commonly prescribed, no matter what the species,” said Kelly Diehl, DVM, DACVIM (SAIM), senior scientific programs and communications adviser at MAF.

The results have been published in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*[2].

Endnotes:

1. [Image]: <https://www.veterinarypracticenews.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Tramadol-Morris-Animal-Foundation-MAF.jpg>
2. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*: <https://bit.ly/2FVC1Ls>

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