**CHARACTERIZATION OF CARDIOMYOPATHY IN BIRMAN CATS**

**PROJECT STUDY:** Phenotypic and genomic characterization of cardiomyopathy in Birman cats

*Principal Investigators: Drs. Virginia Luis Fuentes, Perry Elliott, Dennis Larkin, Richard Piercy, Lois Wilkie, Jose Novo Matos; Royal Veterinary College, London*

*Interim report summary, W16-040; Birman Heart Disease Fund*

Over the past 2 years we have screened Birmans from all over the UK for heart muscle disease (cardiomyopathy), aiming to collect samples from cats with advanced cardiomyopathy and from older normal cats as comparisons. We now have 122 DNA samples, which are ready for genetic sequencing. We will be comparing the genetic sequences between the two groups in 18 genes that have been associated with cardiomyopathy in people (targeted gene sequencing). Two of these 18 genes (MYH7 and MYBPC3) account for the majority of cases of inherited hypertrophic cardiomyopathy in people, and both mutations found so far in cats with cardiomyopathy have been in MYBPC3.

Unfortunately we have suffered a delay in the sequencing due to forces beyond our control, as our original collaborators were no longer able to conduct the genetic sequencing on our samples, and we have had to search for alternative sequencing companies who can offer their services at a similar price. Fortunately we have now found a reliable company that can offer the sequencing at an acceptable price, and we are about to start the targeted gene sequencing in our Birman samples.

*Summary prepared for Winn Feline Foundation © 2018*