

The Summit On Injection-Site Associated Sarcoma

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As discussion mounts on the dilemma of whether to vaccinate less, according to the recommendations of the American Association of Feline Practitioners, to lower probability of causing sarcomas but arguably risk other disease, or maintain traditional vaccination schedules, practitioners are calling for prevention and treatment of sarcoma. A summit of experts was held at the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine annual meeting in Seattle last May to inform veterinarians what they can do to manage this condition.

Awareness and Pathology Of Feline Injection Site Sarcoma

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History

The contributing factors in feline injection site sarcoma first became apparent in the early 1980s, when killed vaccine products were heavily promoted, starting with feline leukemia virus (FeLV). In 1987, certain killed products were required, particularly for rabies vaccine, in some East Coast regions. The first report of injection-site reactions was in the *Journal of the*

American Veterinary Medical Association (JAVMA) in 1991; this paper noted that such reactions had been observed in the dog and cat, many of them in the subcutaneous region but most at rabies immunization sites. Then in 1991, Mattie Hendrick, D.V.M., Ph.D., sent a letter to the editor of JAVMA, suggesting the possibility that fibrosarcomas may be occurring in cats at points of injection site.¹ She suggested that records of injection sites be maintained for compilation. Veterinary pathologists evaluated their archived cases and discovered that this particular lesion had not been specifically observed before.

In 1992, Dr. Hendrick published information in *Cancer Research*, with compelling epidemiologic evidence that there really was a correlation between vaccine sarcomas and injection sites.² In November 1992, in a JAVMA commentary, David Esplin, D.V.M., Ph.D., and I noted that we were seeing these sarcomas with FeLV vac-