

THE GREYHOUND HEALTH REGISTRY  
A PROPOSAL BY HELEN HAMILTON, DVM

It is important to us as owners, breeders and otherwise lovers of Greyhounds to know as much as possible about the particular diseases that affect the health and lifetime of our dogs. It is important, likewise, to the science of veterinary medicine, my own profession. Such information would help us in early diagnoses and possible early cures, and might also help us in making breeding decisions that will promote improved health and physical characteristics.

As people come and go such information is often lost to us. Health registry would be a good way to record and track any major trends that might appear in our dogs. As such a data base becomes larger and more accurate it will be possible to make increasingly better use of the information. In talking to people casually at shows, etc., I have the impression that there may be an increase in middle-age (7-9) cancer in Greyhounds. Is this really so? Can something be done if it is so? A solid data base-a health registry-would probably tell us the answer.

Several people have told me that their relatively young dog has died of no obvious cause. Some have said that the dog had a "stroke" or an "aneurism". These conditions are very rare and without a postmortem this is merely a guess. Such information is of little use. An accurate diagnosis of what the animal died of is needed. This is especially so for carcinoma, such as cervical carcinomas, osteosarcoma, adenocarcinoma, malignant histocytosis, etc.. Whenever practical such diagnoses should be obtained and entered into the registry.

I propose that we systematically keep track of and record all the major illnesses and adverse conditions that our dogs may have throughout their lifetime. Examples of such diseases or conditions would be: congenital heart defects, diabetes, epilepsy, bloat, hip dysplasia, eye defects, drug sensitivity, allergies, etc.. We would exclude abscesses, infectious diseases like kennel cough, lacerations, broken bones and other traumas.

My recommendation would be to maintain this health registry as an open data file available to any legitimate requesters, perhaps with a nominal fee to cover any costs. The registry would be of very limited value if access to it were severely restricted.