

Information received from the Veterinary Services of Germany on 13 May 2020

Dear Monique,

please take note of a SARS-CoV-2 infection of a cat in Germany confirmed by SARS-CoV-2-specific RT-PCR diagnostics by the Bavarian Office for Health and Food Safety, Erlangen, Bavaria.

The history: The 6-year-old female cat lived together with its owner in a retirement home in Upper Palatinate, Bavaria, Germany. The owner died due to COVID-19 on April 12th. There were also 2 other cats (female 15-year old, male 10-year old) living in the same retirement home which has an ongoing COVID-19 outbreak scenario. All three cats had contacts with the residents, but none of the cats had any signs of respiratory disease.

The tests: Throat swabs of all cats were analysed for SARS-CoV-2 on April 29th. The cat from the deceased owner showed a weak positive PCR result for SARS-CoV-2. The other 2 cats were PCR-negative. All cats together were immediately isolated in a local quarantine facility supervised by the local competent veterinary office, and were sampled again by throat swabs on May 4th. The two negative cats did remain negative. The PCR-positive cat was confirmed as clearly positive for SARS-CoV-2.

All cats have subsequently been transferred to an appropriate quarantine isolation facility at the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover, Germany. The cats will be closely monitored for SARS-CoV-2 including development of specific disease symptoms, viral shedding patterns and seroconversion. PCR-positive samples will be further investigated by Hanover, and also confirmed and analysed by whole genome sequencing at the Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut (FLI), Insel Riems, Germany.

The University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover will share this information on the Promed platform.

From personal messages by virologists we are aware that universities and private laboratories do testing of cats and probably other species. We feel the need to have a full picture. We are going to introduce an obligation for veterinary laboratories to notify positive test results.

Kind regards
Dietrich