

Effects of probiotics on fear-related behaviors in moderately anxious cats

Study objectives

This study will investigate the effects of the probiotic BL999 on behavioral and physiologic measurements of fear, anxiety, stress (FAS) in cats with moderate anxiety during novel object tests performed in the home environment.

Inclusion criteria

- Primarily indoor cats between the ages of 12 months to 12 years
- Stable physical and social environment (no dwelling changes, no new pets, no new residents) for 3 months prior to the study start date, and expect to be in same consistent environment for 4 months after enrollment
- Minimum database values within normal limits (complete blood count, serum chemistry, urinalysis, free T4)
- Moderately anxious, based on a feline emotional scale

Exclusion criteria

- Inability to consistently consume the test supplement powder (e.g., poor appetite, dietary restrictions for which animal digest powder or probiotic BL999 is contraindicated)
- Chronic condition not well-controlled (as determined by Dr. Ng and Dr. Albright) over the 6-month period prior to enrollment
- Extreme emotional responses (fearful or friendly) to visitors, based on a feline emotional scale
- Lack of appropriate in-home testing space: approximate 5 ft circumference and isolation from distracting stimuli
- Severe distress during veterinary exams or restraint



Study overview

This study will last for 15 weeks. You will be asked to conduct and record a brief behavioral test, and collect a fresh fecal sample and nail clippings every 6 weeks. You will also be asked to complete brief surveys (about 10 questions) via online survey or phone every week.

- There will be no cost to the client for the physical exam visit, CBC, Chemistry, T4, or urinalysis (value of \$200).
- Owner will be sent a link to the enrollment survey after a brief phone/email interview.

Contact information

Rachel Lees, RVT (*study coordinator*)

rlees1@utk.edu | 865-440-1071

Dr. Julia Albright

jalbrig1@utk.edu | 865-974-8387

Dr. Zennithson Ng

zng@utk.edu | 865-974-8387

IACUC PROTOCOL: 2721-91919