

Information received from the Veterinary Services of France on 12 May 2020

Bonsoir.

Je vous fais suivre, pour information, le communiqué de l'école nationale vétérinaire de Toulouse qui dans le cadre de l'étude des cas suspects de COVID-19 chez les carnivores domestiques, a identifié un nouveau chat infecté.

Bien à vous.

Loïc EVAÏN
Directeur général adjoint
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COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2), cat, Paris

Summary

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) was first reported in Wuhan, China, and rapidly spread worldwide. Previous studies suggested cats could be a species susceptible to SARS-CoV-2 with only 4 naturally infected cats reported to date.

Here, we investigated the putative infection of SARS-CoV-2 in cats from owners previously suspected of being infected with COVID-19. For each cat, rectal and nasopharyngeal swabs were taken. They were submitted to qRT-PCR assay targeting 2 genes of SARS-CoV-2.

One cat tested positive by qRT-PCR on rectal swab and this was confirmed by the OIE collaborating Centre in Pasteur Institute. Nasopharyngeal swabs from this animal were tested negative. This cat showed mild respiratory and digestive signs.

This study reports for the first time the natural infection of a cat in France (near Paris) probably through their owners. There is currently no evidence that cats can be a source of COVID-19 and owners should not abandon their pets or compromise their welfare.

A more detailed publication will soon be submitted

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