

**Comparison of two different treatments for meningoencephalitis of unknown etiology (MUE)**

The purpose of this study is to compare two different medications, leflunomide and cyclosporine, for treating MUE.

Meningoencephalomyelitis of unknown etiology (MUE) is one of the most common neurologic diseases in dogs. The term MUE is an umbrella term encompassing several supposedly immune mediated disorders of the brain and spinal cord in dogs. The clinical diagnosis of MUE is made based on findings on magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and cerebrospinal fluid (CSF). Although MUE affects both the spinal cord and the brain, it is more common in the brain. It affects any breed and size of dogs, but is more common in dogs under 15 kg.

The standard treatment for MUE includes different immunosuppressive medications, where prednisone has been the main drug of choice. The long-term prognosis is variable and many dogs suffer from side effects from the treatment with prednisone. Because of this, other immunomodulatory drugs have been used to treat MUE, alone or in combination with prednisone.

Your pet will be randomly assigned to one of the two treatment protocols. In addition to this medication, your pet will also receive prednisone, which will be tapered over the next 6 months.

Your pet’s participation in the study will include recheck visits 6 and 12 weeks, 6,12, and 18 months after diagnosis. At the first recheck visit, your dog will be anesthetized for a repeat CSF (cerebrospinal fluid) collection for analysis. This is to assess the response to the treatment and is a commonly recommended test when treating MUE. Blood will be collected (1-2 teaspoons) to check a CBC (white and red blood count) and chemistry panel to assess kidney and liver function. At the following 4 rechecks we will collect the same amount of blood for the same tests.

Between the recheck appointments we will have phone or email contact to decide tapering of medications.

Possible benefits of enrolling your pet in this study include: we will pay for the repeat CSF collection and analysis at the 6 weeks recheck, and for the first month of the medication (leflunomide or cyclosporine). This study will help us to compare the efficacy of these treatments, which will benefit other dogs in the future.

Potential risks of enrolling your pet include side effects of the medications which include lethargy, diarrhea, gingival hyperplasia and immunosuppression resulting in a higher risk of urinary tract infections and dermatitis. Hepatotoxicity and nephrotoxicity, although possible, is extremely rare. These side effects are rare.

The study will cover the cost of anesthesia, CSF collection and analysis at the 6 weeks recheck, and a one-month supply of the medication (leflunomide or cyclosporine). You will pay for the recheck visits, blood work and the rest of the medication.

The research team may publish the results of this study for the benefit of animal health; however, you and your pet will not be identified individually.

Enrolling your pet is completely voluntary. If you decide not to enroll in this study, any relationship that you or your pet have with UW Veterinary Care, or the School of Veterinary Medicine will not be affected in any way. You may withdraw your pet from the study at any time, for any reasons.

My signature indicates that:

• I have read, understand, and agree to the above information about the study.

• All my current questions have been answered.

• I agree to enroll my pet in this clinical study.

I consent to enroll \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (dog’s name) in the MUE study and certify that I am the legal custodian/owner of this pet.

Owner name (print): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Owner signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I will receive a copy of this consent form.

The contact person for the study is Helena Rylander, (608) 263 7600, neurology@vetmed.wisc.edu, Helena.rylander@wisc.edu. Please contact us if you have any additional questions or concerns about the study. Thank you!