

Schnauzer Breeds Health Survey Analysis (2009)

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Thanks to everyone who completed a health Survey form early this year. The response was excellent, with 570 respondents sending details of 734 Schnauzers (Giants: 140/194; Schnauzers 72/118; Minis 358/22).

Overall, these results compare very favourably to the KC/BSAVA survey of 2005 which had much lower responses from both Giant and Schnauzer owners (G: 69/113; S: too low to record!; Minis 289/586 - so lower response but more dogs!!).

Overall, these results clearly show that all three sizes are in a healthy condition.

The responses for all 3 sizes split 33.9% males to 66.1% females (G: 37%/63%) and most dogs are vaccinated annually (77%) although Giants are better at 84%. However, 8% of owners claim they never vaccinate!



95.5% of all respondents reported their Schnauzers as 'healthy' (G:88%; Schnauzers 96.6%; Minis 98.6%)

Some 95.6% of all respondent dogs receive some form of medication against parasites annually (G: 94.8%).

Asking owners to report 'general health defects' show relatively small percentages (not surprising when 95.5% report 'healthy' dogs) with 7.5% of respondents say their Schnauzer has any 'defect'. Why the difference, I hear you ask, as these two figures add up to over 100%. Well, the 'general' defect may not affect the health of the dog. Specific Giant health 'defects' included retained testicles (6.3%); teeth - unspecified (4.74%); blindness (1%). The breed split of respondents answering this question (same sort of responses) was G:12%; S:17.8%; M:6.6%.

The next question covered 'chronic problems that is distressing or affects its health & welfare' and Giant owners' highlighted specific conditions, some of which were mirrored in one or other of the other two sizes.

In Giants, epilepsy was quoted by 5.3% of respondents, hypothyroidism at 3.68%, heart condition (unspecified) 3.2%, Cancer (unspecified) 3.2%, bladder weakness 2.1%, arthritis 2.63% and autoimmune problem 2.63%.

Cancer was also highlighted in Schnauzers (5%) Heart (3.4%); epilepsy was reported in Minis but at 1%.

Only 7.9% of Giant owners highlighted unusual or undesirable behaviour problems in the breed (compared to Schnauzers (6.8%) or Minis (16.1%).

In Giants, 'aggressive' and 'timid' behaviour received the same percentage (2.1%) and 'destructive' was reported by 4.2%. The main difference between the breeds on this question is simply that 4.5% of Mini owners reported their dogs to be 'noisy' - sounds like a typical Mini to me!

WHAT CONCLUSIONS CAN BE DRAWN?

This is only our first survey, so we will use it as the basis for measurement against future surveys (the next one may well be launched in our next newsletter - so make sure you complete it again).

General observations must be, as stated earlier, that the breed (all three sizes) appears to be in a good state of health and, so long as breeders continue to be responsible and careful, then there is every hope that that position can be retained.

The Health Representatives of the UK Schnauzer Clubs will be analysing the survey further and discussing any action that should be considered for the future. Of particular relevance will be how our Schnauzer Breeds Survey results measure up against the KC/BSAVA analysis of conditions found in all breeds (based on responses from 36,006 live dogs). That survey produced a tabulated analysis of the prevalence of a condition in all breeds and any significant variance to those figures should be carefully assessed. These figures would indicate that we should be investigating more carefully, any reported incidence of epilepsy and cancer in Giants, which show up in our Schnauzer Breeds survey at 5.3% and 3.2% respectively (against the KC/BSAVA survey 'norm' as 2.6% and 1.79%). Schnauzers results too should be investigated for Cancer, with our survey showing the incidence in that size at 5%.

If you didn't complete a Health Survey form and would still like to do, you will find the existing form on the Club's website. Don't worry about the closing date as all responses continue to be analysed fully. It is important that everyone who did complete a form also continues to take part in the next survey - this is the only way we can track any condition which breeders should be addressing, to ensure that the healthy state of our breed continues to reach the high levels shown by our survey.

Once again, our thanks for taking part.