

Report from the Animal Health Trust  
and The Kennel Club

Extended results of the  
Purebred Dog Health Survey  
for Afghan Hounds

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## Afghan Hounds

A total of 206 forms were sent out and 58 were returned, representing 193 live dogs. This breed had a 28.2 % response rate (58/206) and it represented 0.42% of all returns (58/13,741).

### Mortality data

A total of 143 deaths were reported and this represents 0.90 % of all deaths reported in the survey (143/15,881). The median age at death for Afghan Hounds was 11 years and 11 months (min = 10 months, max = 16 years and 7 months) and this was similar to the overall median of 11 years and 3 months (Figure 1). A total of 34 Afghan Hounds (24%) reached an age of 13 years and only 17 (12%) reached an age of 14 years. Table 1 shows the causes of death for Afghan Hounds. Age at death is presented for the most common causes of death (Figure 2). The most frequent causes of death were cancer and old age, accounting for approximately 50% of deaths between them. The four most common causes of death in Afghans were the same as for all breeds reported on in the survey.

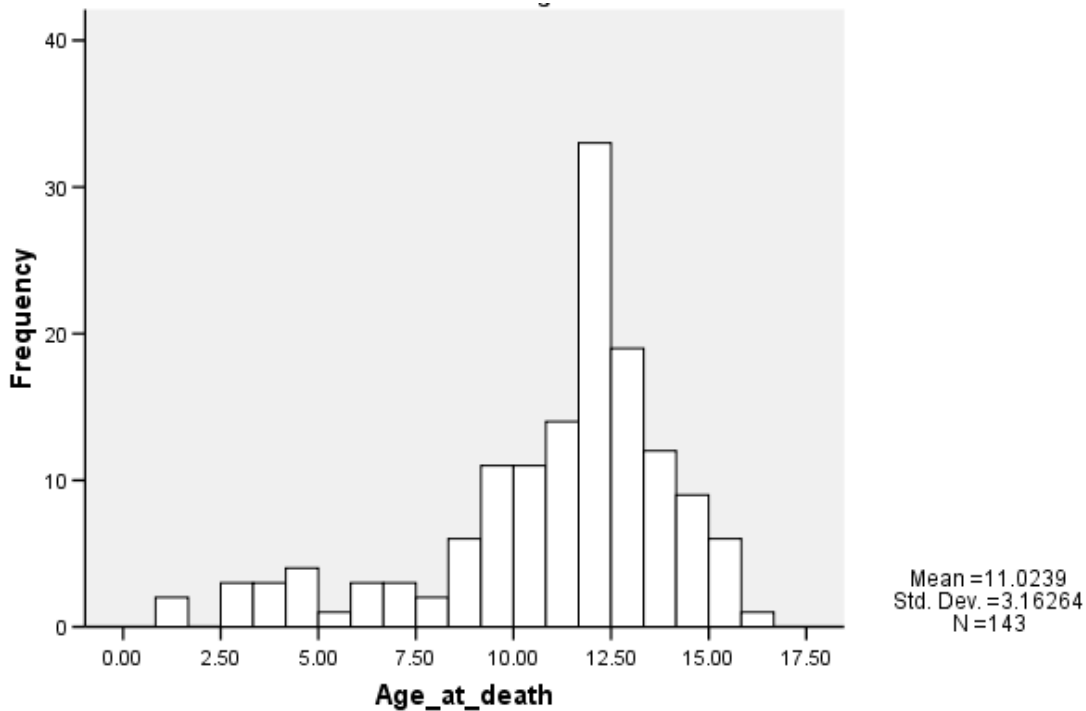


Figure 1. Histogram showing the frequency (as number of dogs) of age at death (in years) for the 143 Afghan Hound deaths with age at death reported.

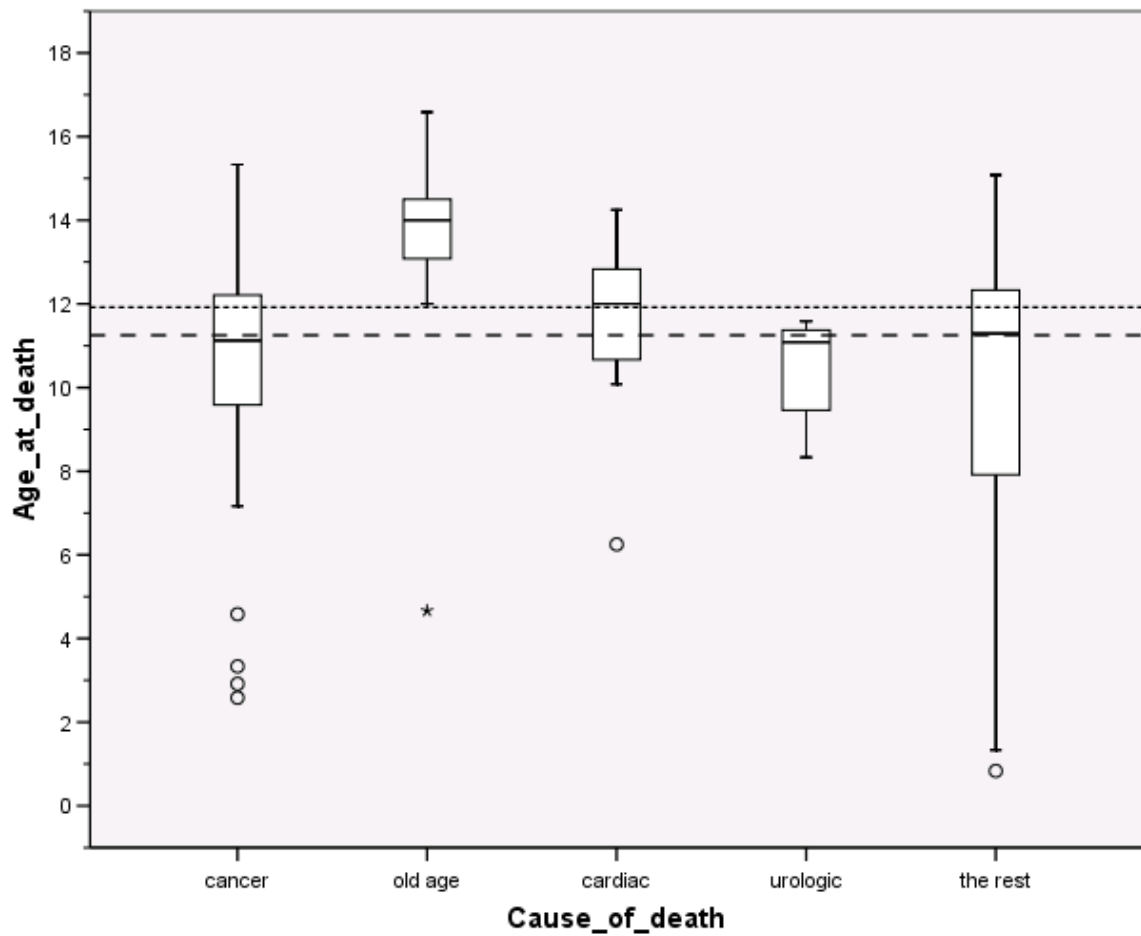


Figure 2. Box and whisker plot of age at death in years for the most common causes of death in Afghan Hounds (N=143). The dashed line (---) is the overall median age at death for all dogs in the survey and the dotted line (----) is the overall median age of death for Afghan Hounds. The solid line within each grey box represents the median age at death from the condition.

Table 1. Causes of death by organ system/category for Afghan Hounds.

Cause of death	No. of deaths	% of deaths	Most common specific causes in descending order (number of dogs affected)
1 Cancer	44	30.8	Bone/osteosarcoma (7), mammary (7), type unspecified (7), lung (4), lymphoma (3), brain tumour (3), gastrointestinal tract (3), perianal/anal gland (2), testicle (2), heart, liver, nasal, prostate, spleen, tongue (1 each)
2 Old age	29	20.3	Old age & age combinations, including multiple reasons for euthanasia
3 Cardiac	15	10.5	Heart failure (9), heart attack (3), heart defect unspecified (2), DCMP (1)
4 Urologic	7	4.9	Chronic or unspecified kidney failure (4), acute kidney failure (1)
5 Trauma	5	3.5	Unspecified trauma or accident (4), road traffic accident (1)
6 Combinations	4	2.8	Collapse + laryngeal collapse, epilepsy + heart failure (1), chronic kidney failure + senility (1), weakness + kidney failure unspecified
7 Hepatic	4	2.8	Chronic or unspecified liver failure
8 Neurologic	4	2.8	Seizures (2), spinal cord disease unspecified (1), meningitis (1)
9 Other	4	2.8	Uncodeable – weakness or loss of limb function or paresis
10 Respiratory	4	2.8	Unspecified, laryngeal paralysis
11 Cerebral vascular	3	2.1	Stroke or cerebral vascular accident (CVA) (3)
12 Endocrine	3	2.1	Addisons disease (2), Cushings disease (1)
13 Gastrointestinal	3	2.1	Pancreatitis (1), malabsorption (1), gastroenteritis unspecified (1)
14 Sudden death	3	2.1	Sudden death (3)
15 Unknown	3	2.1	Unknown or undiagnosed illness
16 Behaviour	2	1.4	Unspecified behavioural problem (2), aggression (1)
17 Musculoskeletal	2	1.4	Joint pain (1), arthritis (1)
18 Immune mediated	1	0.7	Haemolytic anaemia
19 Internal bleeding	1	0.7	Internal bleeding
20 Perioperative	1	0.7	Perioperative
21 Pining	1	0.7	Pining or sadness
Total	143	100.0	

## Morbidity data

The median current age of the 193 live dogs with a reported age was 6 years (min=6 months, max=14 years, Figure 3). Health information was reported for 193 live dogs of which 135 (70%) were healthy and 58 (30%) had at least one reported health condition, resulting in a total of 90 reported conditions with a median of 1 condition/dog (min=1, max=5).

The median current age of all healthy dogs with a reported age (N=135) was 6 years (min=6 months, max=13 years and 6 months). The distribution of gender and neuter status is shown in Table 2.

The median current age of all dogs with one or more disease conditions and a reported age (N=57) was 6 years (min=9 months, max=14 years). The median age at diagnosis for all disease occurrences with a reported age at diagnosis (N=84) was 2 years and 5 months (min= 2 months, max= 14 years, Figure 4). Table 3 shows the disease conditions for Afghan Hounds. The top three diseases reported in Afghans was similar to that reported for all breeds in the survey. Age at diagnosis is presented for the most common disease conditions (Figure 5).

Respiratory conditions warrant a special mention because of concerns that have been raised previously in the Afghan Hound. As in most large breeds of dog, laryngeal paralysis occurs in the Afghan Hound. In our survey, it was reported as the cause of death in 2 dogs and a contributing factor in a third death, and 3 cases were reported under disease conditions. It has been reported that chylothorax, a rare, serious, potentially fatal, condition in which lymphatic fluid (chyle) accumulates in the thorax, occurs more frequently in Afghan Hounds than in other pedigree breeds of dog. However, the evidence for this is poor – although it undeniably has occurred in this breed there is little to suggest that it is more common in the Afghan than in any other breed. This condition was not reported at all in the breed in our survey, although 2 deaths due to unspecified respiratory disease were reported which may or may not have been related to chylothorax.

There were 3 reported cases of hypothyroidism, a condition which is suspected of perhaps being over-diagnosed in this breed as a result of the fact that all sight hounds have lower thyroid hormone levels as normal and this may not always be taken into consideration by the reporting laboratory service/veterinary practitioner. Interestingly there was also one reported case of hyperthyroidism in this breed, diagnosed at 2 years and 10 months of age. This may have been a true case of hyperthyroidism, perhaps secondary to thyroid gland neoplasia (adenoma or carcinoma) although this would be unusual in such a young dog, or this could have been a result of misreporting by the owner. This case highlights one of the limitations of using owner reported diagnoses without veterinary confirmation or validation of the reported data.

Table 2. Distribution of gender and neuter status for 193 Afghan Hounds with reported gender and neuter status.

Gender	Neuter status		Totals
	Intact	Neutered	
Female	79	22	101 (52%)
Male	85	7	92 (48%)
Totals	164 (85%)	29 (15%)	193 (100%)

Significantly more females were neutered (P=0.006).

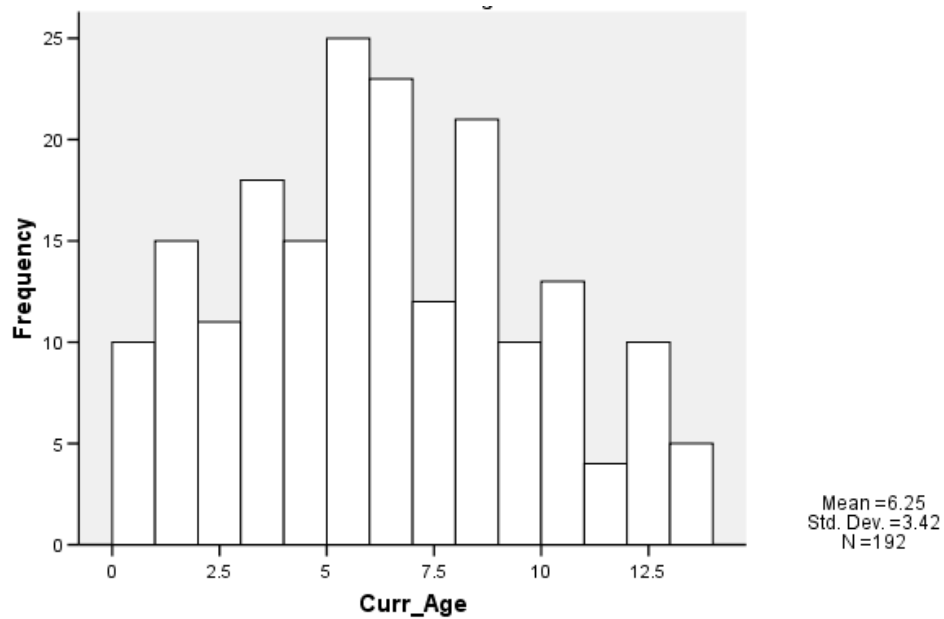


Figure 3. Histogram showing frequency of current age in years for the 192 live Afghan Hounds with age reported.

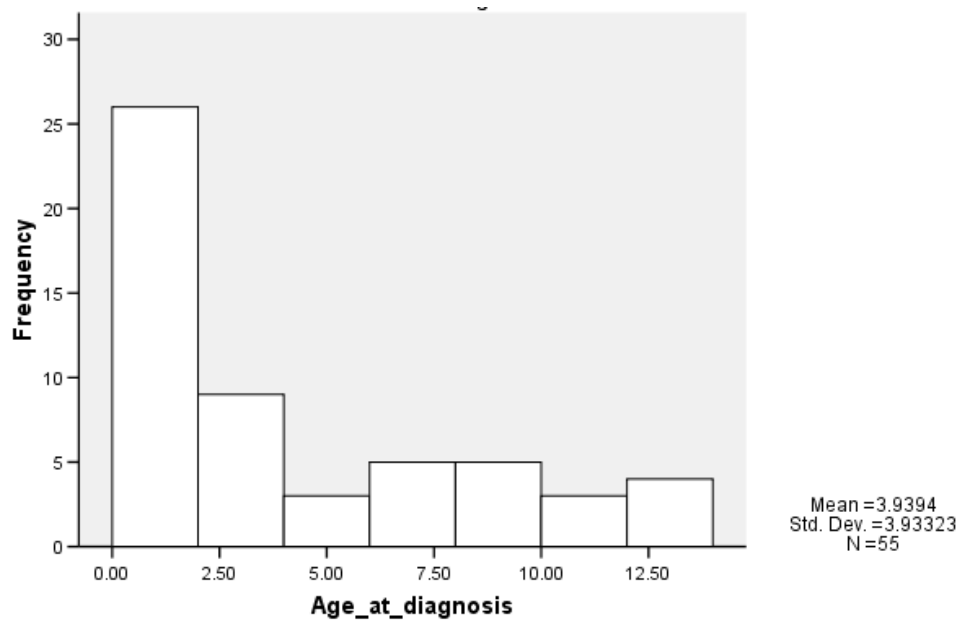


Figure 4. Histogram showing frequency of age at diagnosis for the 55 Afghan Hounds with one or more disease conditions, using the youngest age at which a disease condition was first reported for those dogs with more than one disease condition or episode.

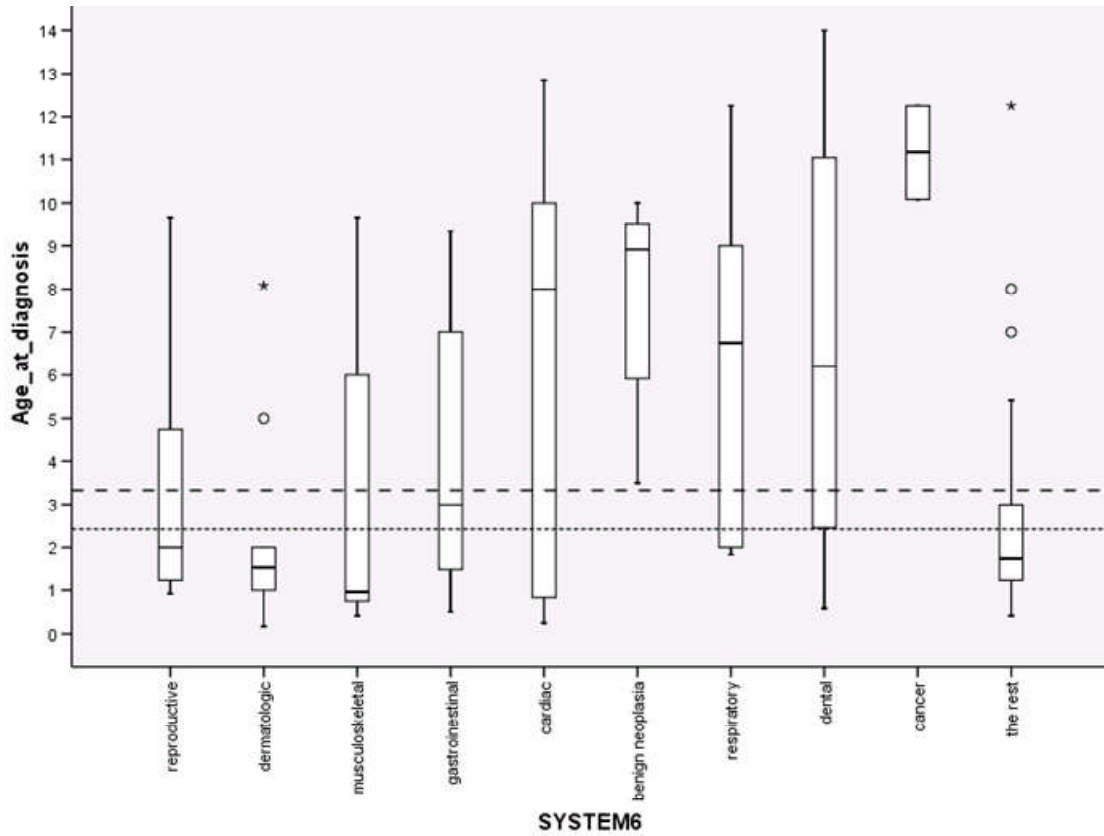


Figure 5. Box and whisker plot of age at diagnosis in years for the most common disease conditions in descending order for Afghan Hounds (N=57 dogs with 84 conditions with age reported). The dashed line (---) is the overall median age at diagnosis for all dogs in the survey and the dotted line (----) is the overall median age at diagnosis for Afghan Hounds. The solid line within each grey box represents the median age at diagnosis from the condition.

Table 3. Disease conditions by organ system/category for Afghan Hounds.

Disease condition	All conditions		Most common specific conditions in descending order
	N	%	
1 Reproductive	14	15.6	False pregnancy (8), pyometra (2), infertility or poor fertility (2), vaginitis (1), prostatomegaly (1)
2 Dermatologic	11	12.2	Dermatitis* (4), puppy pyoderma (2), interdigital cysts (2), pyotraumatic dermatitis or hot spot (1), fading nose pigment (1), hairloss (1)
3 Musculoskeletal	10	11.1	Arthritis (3), stiff joints (2), prognathism or undershot jaw (1), osteochondrosis dissecans shoulder (1), cruciate ligament rupture (1), fracture (1), unspecified lameness (1)
4 Gastrointestinal	9	10.0	Gastric dilatation/volvulus (GDV) (2), pancreatitis (2), Vomiting (1), gastroenteritis acute (1), constipation (1), colitis (1), unspecified bowel disease (1)
5 Cardiac	7	7.8	Heart murmur (1 grade III, 2 unspecified), chronic coughing (2), congestive heart failure (1), cardiomegaly or enlarged heart (1)
6 Benign neoplasia	6	6.7	Lipoma (5), adenoma (1)
7 Respiratory	6	6.7	laryngeal paralysis (2), lung lobe torsion (1), kennel cough (1), chronic coughing (1), rhinitis (1)
8 Aural	5	5.6	Otitis externa (5)
9 Dental	4	4.4	Dental disease (3), retained puppy teeth
10 Endocrine	4	4.4	Hypothyroidism (3), hyperthyroidism (1)
11 Cancer	3	3.3	Type unspecified – one each of liver, lung and mammary
12 Ocular	3	3.3	Red eye (1), extra eyelashes or distichiasis (1), keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS) or dry eye (1)
13 Behaviour	2	2.2	Unspecified behavioural problem (1), aggression (1)
14 Immune mediated	2	2.2	Insect bite reaction (1), flea allergy (1)
15 Unknown	2	2.2	Unknown or undiagnosed illness (2)
16 Neurologic	1	1.1	Polyneuropathy
17 Trauma	1	1.1	Forelimb trauma
Total	90	100.0	

\* Undiagnosed skin irritation or scratching or itchy skin (3) and 1 case with undiagnosed infection

The original report is available online at The Kennel Club website: <http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/item/549>.