

Report from the Kennel Club/  
British Small Animal Veterinary Association  
Scientific Committee

Summary results of the  
Purebred Dog Health Survey  
for the Rhodesian Ridgeback breed

Warning: The results of this survey and particularly the breed-specific analyses should be interpreted with caution. The overall response rate was only 24% with breed-specific response rates from 4.5% to 64.7%.

## The Rhodesian Ridgeback breed

A total of 535 forms were sent out and 172 were returned, representing 330 live dogs. This breed had a 32.1% response rate (172/535) and it represented 1.25% of all returns (172/13,741).

### Mortality data

A total of 183 deaths were reported and this represents 1.15% of all deaths reported in the survey (183/15,881). The median age at death for the Rhodesian Ridgeback breed was 11 years (min = 1 year, max = 16 years and 2 months) and this was lower than the overall median of 11 years and 3 months (Figure 1). Table 1 shows the causes of death for the Rhodesian Ridgeback breed. Age at death is presented for the most common causes of death (Figure 2).

Table 1. Causes of death by organ system/category for the Rhodesian Ridgeback breed.

Cause of death	N	%	Most common specific causes in descending order
1 Cancer	56	30.6	Type unspecified (liver, bone, spleen)
2 Old age	33	18.0	Old age & age combinations
3 Other	13	7.1	Uncodeable
4 Cardiac	11	6.0	Heart attack; heart failure
5 Combinations	11	6.0	
6 Gastrointestinal	11	6.0	Gastric volvulus/dilatation (GDV); megaoesophagus
7 Neurologic	9	4.9	Seizures; IVDD; syringohydromyelia
8 Behaviour	8	4.4	Aggression; chronic neurosis
9 Musculoskeletal	7	3.8	Arthritis; hip dysplasia
10 Urologic	5	2.7	Kidney failure (chronic & acute); incontinence
11 Cerebral vascular	4	2.2	Stroke or cerebral vascular accident
12 Perioperative	4	2.2	
13 Trauma	4	2.2	Road traffic accident; unspecified
14 Poisoning	3	1.6	
15 Respiratory	2	1.1	Laryngeal paralysis
16 Reproductive	1	0.5	Pyometra
17 Unknown	1	0.5	
Total	183	100.0	

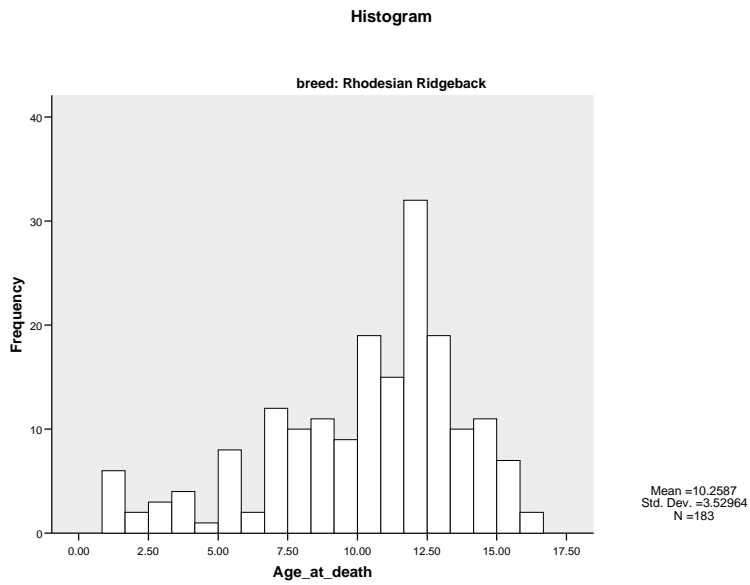


Figure 1. Histogram showing the frequency (as number of dogs) of age at death (in years) for the 183 Rhodesian Ridgeback deaths with age at death reported.

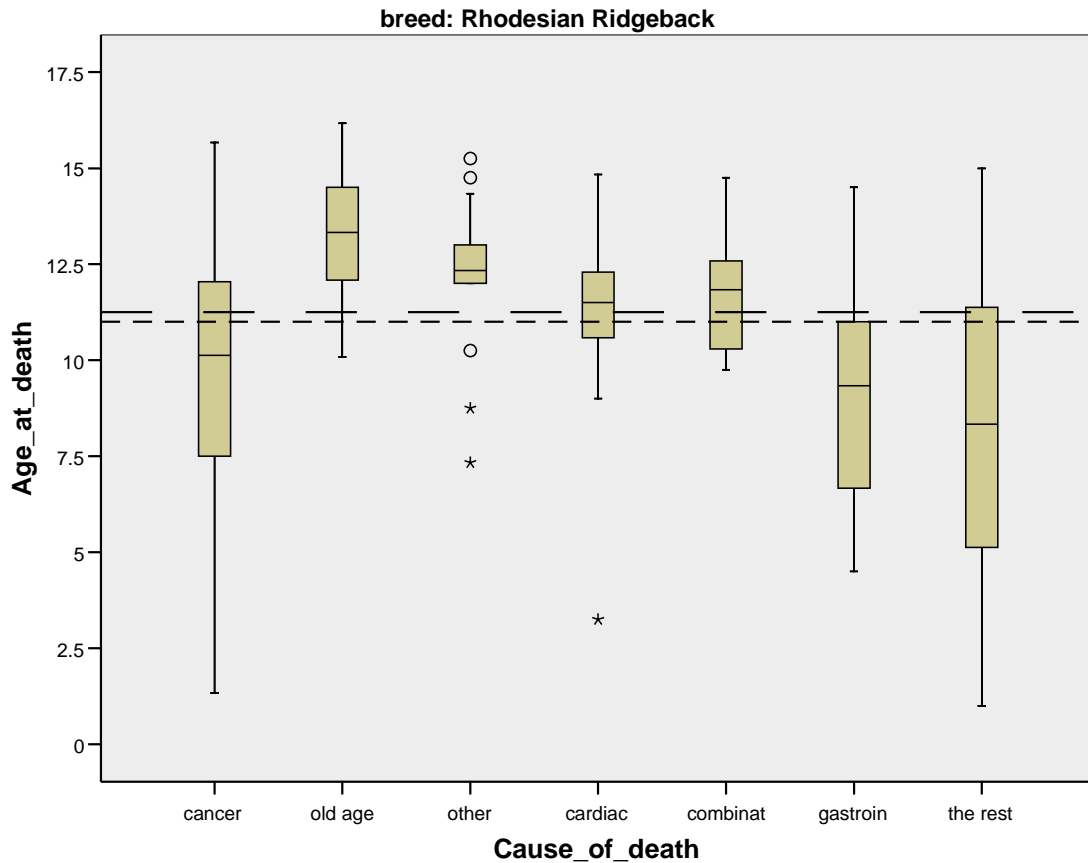


Figure 2. Box and whisker plot of age at death in years for the most common causes of death in the Rhodesian Ridgeback breed (N=183). The dashed line (---) is the overall median age at death for all dogs in the survey and the dotted line (----) is the overall median age of death for the Rhodesian Ridgeback breed. The solid line within each grey box represents the median age at death from the condition.

### Morbidity data

The median current age of the 328 live dogs with a reported age was 4 years and 6 months (min=2 months, max=14 years and 6 months, Figure 3). Health information was reported for 330 live dogs of which 222 (67%) were healthy and 108 (33%) had at least one reported health condition, resulting in a total of 164 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=222) was 3 years and 6 months (min=2 months, max=14 years). 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=104) was 6 years and 4 months (min=4 months, max=14 years and 6 months). The median age at diagnosis for all disease occurrences with a reported age at diagnosis (N=157) was 2 years and 9 months (min= 2 months, max= 14 years, Figure 4). Table 3 shows the disease conditions for the Rhodesian Ridgeback breed. Age at diagnosis is presented for the most common disease conditions (Figure 5).

Table 2. Distribution of gender and neuter status for the 327 Rhodesian Ridgeback breed with reported gender and neuter status.

Gender	Neuter status		Totals
	Intact	Neutered	
Female	117	84	201 (61%)
Male	93	33	126 (39%)
Totals	210 (64%)	117 (36%)	327 (100%)

Significantly more females were neutered (P=0.0042).

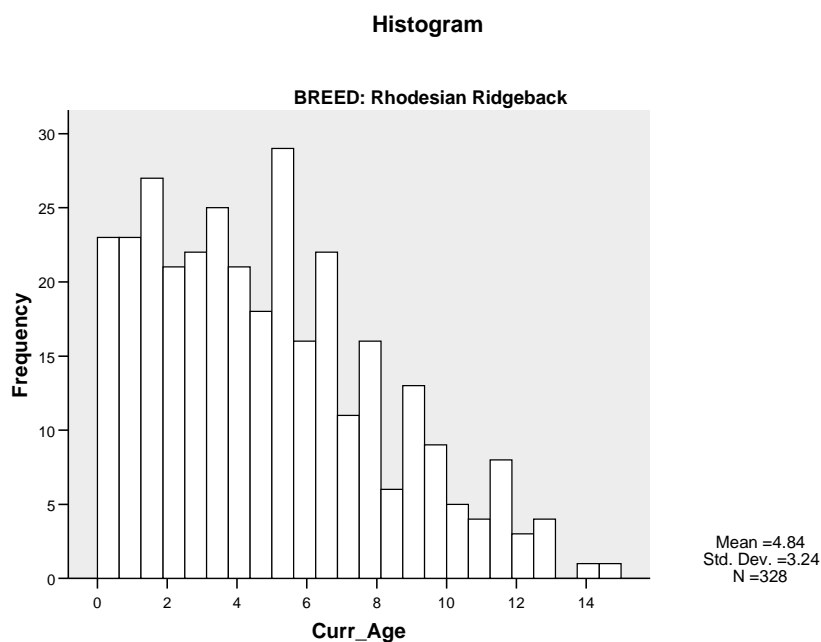


Figure 3. Histogram showing frequency of current age in years for the 328 live Rhodesian Ridgeback breed with age reported.

### Histogram

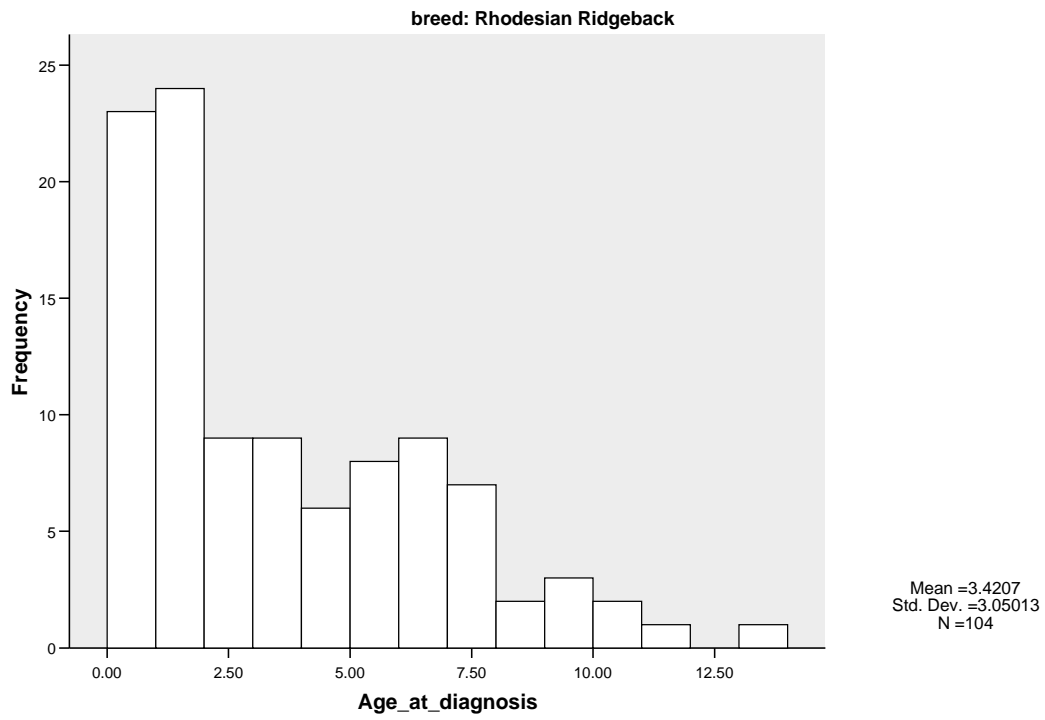


Figure 4. Histogram showing frequency of age at diagnosis for the 104 of the Rhodesian Ridgeback breed with one or more disease conditions, using the youngest age at which a disease condition was first reported for those dogs with more than one disease condition or episode.

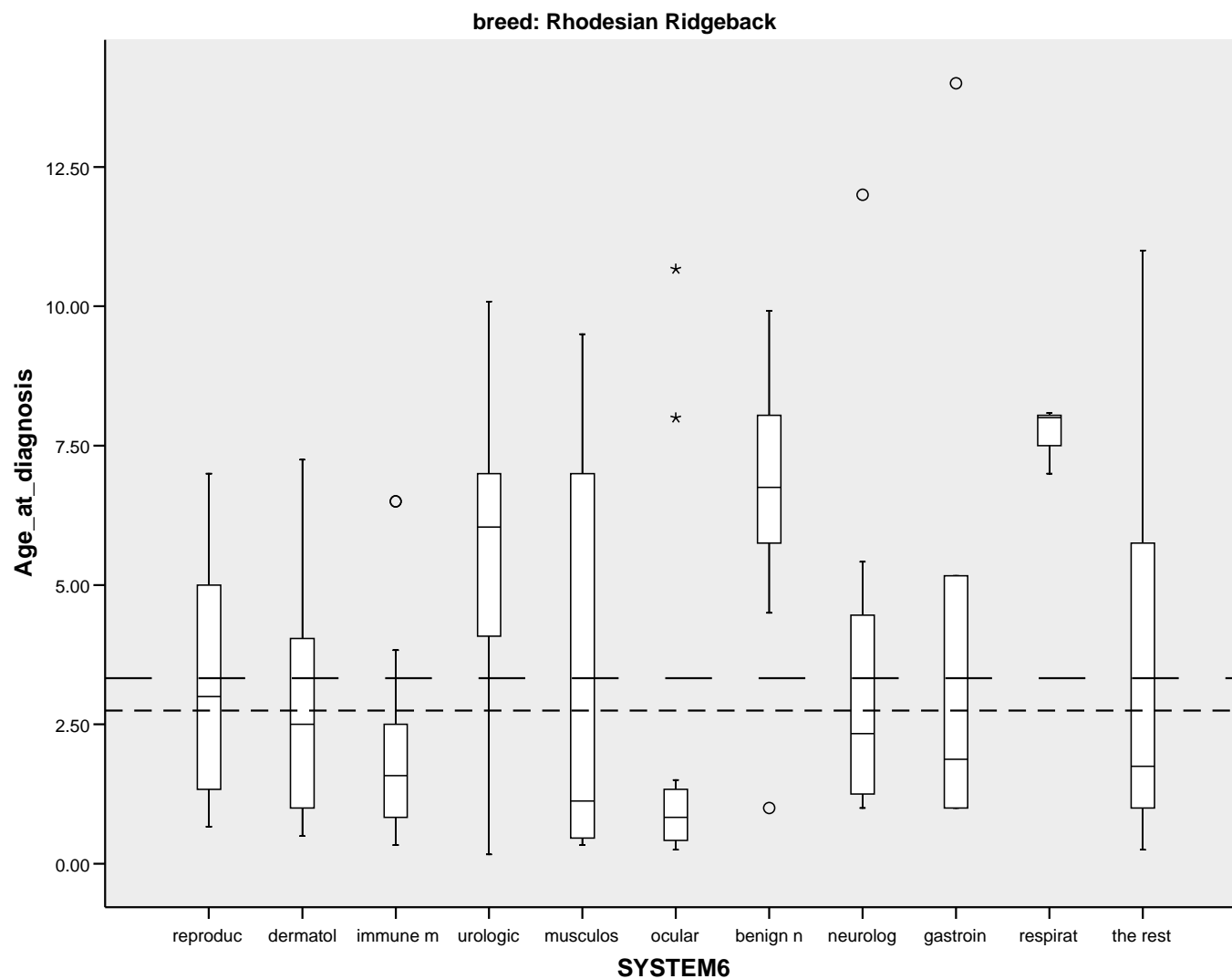


Figure 5. Box and whisker plot of age at diagnosis in years for the most common disease conditions in descending order for the Rhodesian Ridgeback breed (N=104 dogs with 157 conditions with age reported). The dashed line (---) is the overall median age at diagnosis for all dogs in the survey and the dotted line (----) is the overall median age at diagnosis for the Rhodesian Ridgeback breed. 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 the Rhodesian Ridgeback breed.

Disease condition	All conditions		Most common specific conditions in descending order
	N	%	
1 Reproductive	26	15.9	False pregnancy; pyometra; dystochia (uterine inertia=physical blockage); cryptorchid
2 Dermatologic	25	15.2	Alopecia; pyotraumatic dermatitis; mites; recurrent pyoderma; dermatitis
3 Immune mediated	18	11.0	Atopy; food allergy; other allergy (unspecified); gluten-sensitive enteropathy
4 Urologic	14	8.5	Incontinence (unspecified>after spay); cystitis; haematuria; urethral obstruction
5 Musculoskeletal	12	7.3	Arthritis; OCD; hypertrophic osteodystrophy
6 Ocular	12	7.3	Entropion; cataracts; distichiasis
7 Benign neoplasia	11	6.7	Lipoma; unspecified (tail); cyst (flank); chondroma (hind limb)
8 Aural	8	4.9	Otitis externa; excessive ear wax
9 Neurologic	7	4.3	Seizures; deafness; rage syndrome; secondary seizures (brain trauma)
10 Gastrointestinal	6	3.7	Colitis; diarrhoea; IBD; malabsorption
11 Other	5	3.0	Uncodeable
12 Cardiac	4	2.4	Heart murmur (unspecified>grade 1)
13 Endocrine	4	2.4	Hypothyroidism; unspecified
14 Unknown	4	2.4	Undiagnosed illness
15 Cancer	3	1.8	Type unspecified (hock); neoplasia; chondrosarcoma
16 Respiratory	3	1.8	Laryngeal paralysis
17 Anal gland	1	0.6	Anal sacculitis
18 Trauma	1	0.6	Eyeball
Total	164	100.0	