



Sebaceous adenitis

Sebaceous adenitis (SA) is an uncommon skin condition. It is not known what causes SA to occur, but it is an inflammatory, possibly immune-mediated condition where inflammation targets the sebaceous glands and these are destroyed. In Vizslas it has been suggested that the sebaceous glands are destroyed as "innocent bystanders" rather than being the prime target of inflammation. Sebaceous glands produce an oily substance that is essential for normal structure and function of hair, and nearby skin. This helps keep the coat shiny, and with the proteins it contains (immunoglobulins, interferon), helps to protect against infections. Loss of the sebaceous glands leads to dry skin and hair loss, and susceptibility to infections. Vizslas with SA can have a moth-eaten appearance due to hair loss. Early diagnosis and control of the condition is required to prevent a degree of permanent hair loss. Diagnosis is made on a punch biopsy of skin that is examined by a pathologist.

SA is most commonly seen in Standard Poodles, Akitas, Vizslas and Samoyeds, though any breed or cross-bred dog may be affected. When we ran our health survey in 2009 we did not have any cases reported, however since then we have become aware of a few dogs that have since been diagnosed with this condition. Two were obtained from breeders and the other was a rescue. Age at presentation of these dogs ranged from 1 year of age to 7.5 years of age.

To get an idea if this condition has been going under the collective breed radar, veterinary pathologists (in different states) that have an interest in dermatopathology were contacted to ask if they have diagnosed any cases of SA in Hungarian Vizslas. Two reported they have seen SA most commonly in Akitas and in Poodles. One pathologist had seen 2 cases in Vizslas in 5 years; the other specialist has seen no cases in Vizslas in two years. There is no centralised reporting of conditions like SA, and SA is not particularly difficult to recognise microscopically, so any number of cases may have gone to other pathologists and been reported by them. I do not think however that 'any number' in this instance is a large number; SA is an uncommon condition.

Because SA is diagnosed more frequently in some breeds than in others, there seems to be an inherited predisposition, and breeding from affected dogs is discouraged. Some sources also recommend not breeding from parents or litter brothers and sisters. We are aware that where possible, the breeders of affected dogs have been notified of the diagnosis of SA in a dog they have bred. Earlier this year in NSW a sibling of an affected dog was used for breeding.

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Picture of a Vizsla with Sebaceous Adenitis from:
Oral vitamin A as an adjunct treatment for canine sebaceous adenitis.
Andrea T. H. Lam, Verena K. Affolter, Catherine A. Outerbridge, Barbara Gericota,
Stephen D. White. *Veterinary Dermatology* 2011; 22(4) 305-311.



Beau is an Australian Vizsla with Sebaceous Adenitis. You can see the spots on his back where the hair is missing. He also had hair missing on the bridge of his nose. Beau's owner was quick recognise a problem, and to get specialist veterinary diagnosis and care.