



COVID-19 mythbusting series

Can cats transfer COVID-19 to other animals, and is there a risk of zoonosis?

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Webinar transcript

To determine whether cats can spread COVID-19 to other cats, two experimental studies have now been published.

Three cats in each study were experimentally infected with SARS-CoV-2, and then uninfected cats were placed in the same cage. The uninfected cats were then monitored over several days to see whether they became infected.

Now in the first study, one out of three uninfected cats became infected, whereas in the second study, all three uninfected cats became infected.

What does this mean? Well, it simply shows that under experimental conditions, transmission between cats is possible, but does this reflect what happens to cats in standard households?

The dose of virus administered to each cat was extremely high, and we know that given the choice, most cats will not spend 24 hours a day next to another cat.

What about transmission to other animals? Now experimental challenge of a range of species, including dogs and pigs, has showed that these animals are not readily susceptible to even large doses of the virus. This means that it is highly unlikely that cats could spread the virus to them.

As for transmission to humans, there are no cases where this has been reported, but it is a theoretical possibility. However, the biggest risk of infection to people is of overwhelmingly other people.

For more free COVID-19 resources for veterinary professionals, visit
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