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Microchip Can Save Your Pet

By Sondra Brown

MY VIEW

<http://www.tallahassee.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070916/OPINION05/709160311/1006/OPINION>

As practicing veterinarians in the Tallahassee area, we felt compelled to reply to the story “Microchip Implants Linked to Cancer,” published in the *Democrat* on Sept. 9.

Information came from an uncontrolled study on laboratory mice and rats, which were bred for cancer research and have a genetic predisposition to developing tumors.

In addition, these rodents in the study had been used in drug trials; therefore, it is impossible to differentiate if the tumor formation was related to the microchip or to previous injections of drugs administered to the animals.

Over the last 15 years, millions of dogs, cats, ferrets, birds, horses, etc., have been safely implanted with microchips, with few reports of adverse reactions from this potentially life-saving product. Dan Knox, a veterinarian with AVID microchip company, reports more than 15 million of their microchips have been implanted, with only 10 complications of unknown etiology reported as serious.

In the U.K., where more than half of all owned dogs have a microchip, the British Small Animal Veterinary Association has established a formal system for the reporting of adverse events related to microchips. In 10 years, only two tumors have been reported. As is the case in the lab animals, it is impossible to determine if the tumors were due to microchip, vaccines, or other injections.

Clearly, a sensational article driven by people's fear of cancer catches the eye and creates a “buzz” in the community.

However, as a result of the story, we have had several clients call, wanting to have microchips removed from their pets.

As a group, we have never seen any serious complications associated with microchip implantation. What we have seen are many instances of implanted pets being safely reunited with their owners.

All stray animals that come into our clinics are scanned for a microchip. Some of these animals have been seriously injured and are in dire need of emergency care. The identification provided by this small, benign implant allows us to contact worried owners and advise them of their pet's condition.

Animal shelters across the nation euthanize thousands of pets a year. Microchip implantation is an invaluable means of permanently identifying a pet through a number pattern, unique to that pet, stored on the chip.

The pet is scanned with a hand-held scanner, and the number pattern is revealed. Each microchip company has a 24-hour phone service. The number pattern is reported to them, and the company can then provide the name, address and phone number of the owner of this pet. The pet and its owner can be reunited within minutes in some cases.

AVID microchip company reports an average of 1,000 lost pet identifications per day.

If you have any questions about microchipping your pets, please contact your veterinarian.

Any decisions clients make about the health and well being of their pets should be well-informed, based on scientific facts and not sensational allegations.

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