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ZOONOTIC DISEASE

Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from a cat to a person

THE recent description of a case of Covid-19 in a veterinarian from Thailand, who likely acquired the infection from a cat that had SARS-CoV-2, is a matter of concern.¹

Having caught the virus from one of its Covid-19-infected owners, the cat, which also developed respiratory signs, likely passed the infection (through sneezing) to the vet while she was examining it.

Furthermore, the genomic sequences characterising the SARS-CoV-2 isolates obtained from the cat, as well as from its owners and from the

vet, were shown to overlap with each other.¹

However, it should also be noted that while there is significant biological plausibility that the virus entered the vet's body through the ocular route – since she wore an N95 protective mask during the clinical examination of the cat – her anti-SARS-CoV-2 immunisation status was not reported.

Nonetheless, on the basis of the above findings, cats, whose susceptibility to natural and experimental SARS-CoV-2 infection has been previously documented in a number of studies, can now be added to the growing list of domestic and wild animal species from which SARS-CoV-2 transmission to people has been reported; mink (mink farms in the Netherlands, Denmark and USA), hamsters (pet shops in Hong Kong) and white-tailed deer in Canada are already on the list.²

In this respect, while transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from person to person is by far the most common route, the viral transmission cycles and dynamics occurring between people and



Viral transmission cycles occurring between people and animals should be monitored

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animals, and from animal to animal, should also be carefully monitored.

Indeed, continuous intersectorial collaboration within the framework of One Health is essential to overcome this pandemic. Once again, this is a reminder that human, animal and environmental health are mutually and inextricably linked to each other.

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References

- 1 Sila T, Sunghan J, Laochareonsuk W, et al. Suspected cat-to-human transmission of SARS-CoV-2, Thailand, July-September 2021. *Emerg Infect Dis* 2022;28:1485–8
- 2 Di Guardo G. We should be vaccinating domestic and wild animal species against Covid-19. *Vet Rec* 2022;190:293

DEATH NOTICE

Lea On 13 June 2020, Keith Lea, BVSc, BA, MRCVS, of Whitchurch, Shropshire. Mr Lea qualified from Bristol in 1959.