



Me- OUCH!

Recognising and treating
post-operative pain in cats

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Managing pain in cats



In recent years there have been substantial advances in our understanding of acute pain physiology and management in animals. Despite the availability of numerous pain-relieving techniques and medicines in the veterinary field, many cats still remain untreated after potentially painful events, including castration and ovariectomy.

Pain behaviours in cats are subtle and can be difficult to recognise as cats are very good at hiding the signs. Individual cats can also experience varying levels of pain despite similar procedures and pain management protocols. As a result, pain in cats can often be missed resulting in under-treatment, especially following surgical procedures such as neutering.

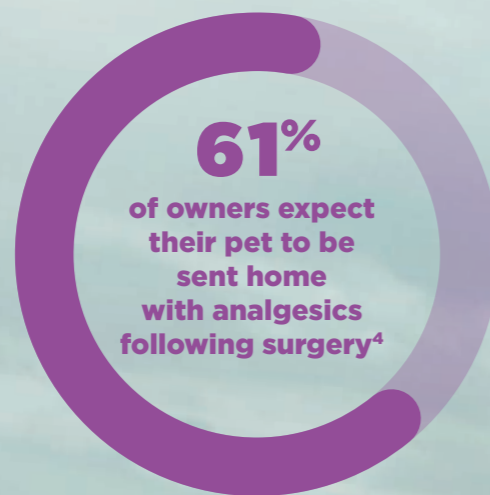
Why is it important to treat pain?



Pain management is fundamental to feline health and welfare.¹

Untreated pain causes many detrimental effects, such as:

- 🐾 Slow recovery and delayed healing²
- 🐾 Altered pulmonary and cardiac function^{2,3}
- 🐾 Increased pain perception and prolonged pain²
- 🐾 Decreased quality of life²
- 🐾 Increased stress response to surgery^{2,3}



It is therefore extremely important to recognise, measure and assess acute pain in cats so that we can act accordingly and improve patient care.

Many cats do not receive post-operative analgesia

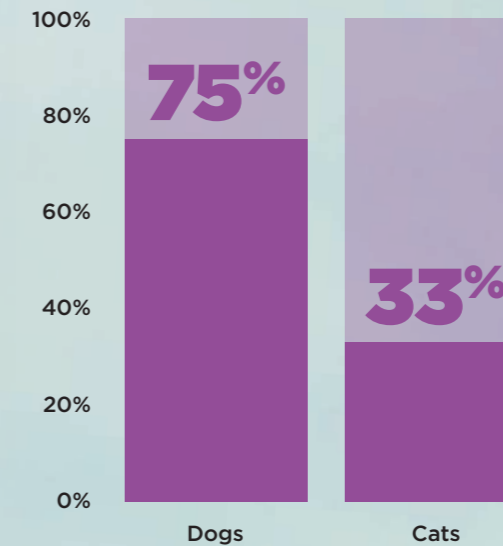


A study published in 2015 showed that only 33% of cats received post-operative analgesia following routine surgery compared with 75% of dogs.

It also showed that neutering was considered more painful in dogs than in cats.⁴

Post-operative pain relief in cats

Proportion of pets that receive post-operative NSAIDs after routine surgery⁴



Male vs female pain management

More recently, a 2019 survey showed that when it came to cat neutering there remains a big difference in prescribing behaviour between spays and castrations; 76% of vets

prescribed a follow-on course of NSAIDs for all of their cat spays whereas only 26% of vets did the same for cat castrates.⁵

76%

Yes, I routinely prescribe post-operative NSAIDs for up to 3 days to cats undergoing ovariectomy



26%

Yes, I routinely prescribe post-operative NSAIDs for up to 3 days to cats undergoing castration



Why is recognising pain in cats challenging following surgery?



Primarily, cats are very good at hiding pain, which makes identifying and recognising signs of pain very challenging. It is also important to remember that the majority of cats are benefitting from peri-operative analgesia while they are at the practice.

Once these cats are at home and no longer have analgesics on board, they can show behavioural signs indicative of pain for up to 3 days post-surgery.⁶

These subtle signs of pain are often misinterpreted by owners as normal surgical or anaesthetic recovery.



Recommendations for post-operative pain management



Post-operative pain following castration or ovariohysterectomy can have a negative impact on a cat's behaviour, sleep patterns and willingness to play for up to 3 days post-surgery.⁶

Conversely, effective post-operative pain relief has major positive effects on your patients:²

- Facilitates post-operative recovery
- Enhances welfare and well-being

In addition, adequate pain management helps strengthen the relationship between the veterinary surgeon, owner and pet.²

Given the importance of adequate post-operative pain relief in cats, ISFM recommends that post-operative NSAIDs should be given for 3 days after castration or ovariohysterectomy.⁷

Following castration or ovariohysterectomy, ISFM recommends that cats should be sent home with a 3 day course of post-operative NSAIDs⁷

Assessing cat pain in practice



Pain recognition is frequently based on a subjective assessment which can produce results that are extremely variable between different assessors, depending on their experience and beliefs. Other physiological measurements such as heart rate and blood pressure are non-specific and are frequently elevated in the hospital environment.

The use of these methods alone is therefore likely to result in painful cats being missed and going untreated.

It is recommended that all cats undergoing surgery should be assessed using a validated pain scoring tool such as the Glasgow Composite Measure Pain Scale-Feline (Glasgow CMPS-Feline).^{1,8-10}

Glasgow CMPS-Feline



The advantages of the Glasgow CMPS-Feline

The Glasgow CMPS-Feline is a set of questions covering seven categories, including the cat's behaviour and appearance, to provide a meaningful guide to determining when analgesia is required.^{1,9,11}

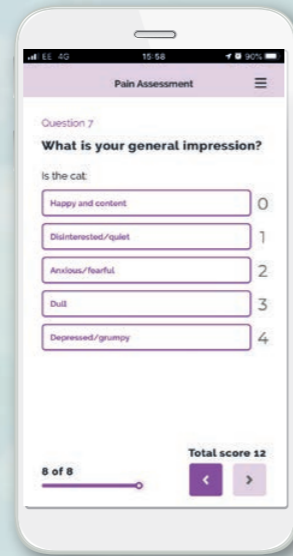
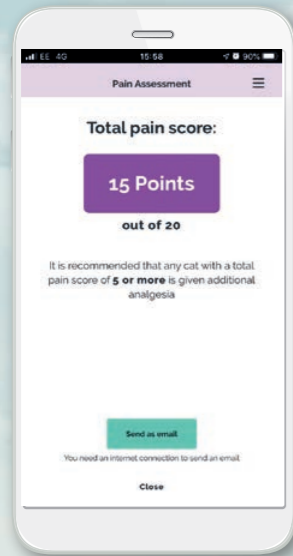
The advantages of the Glasgow CMPS-Feline include:

- Validated, so you can be confident that it detects pain
- Facilitates routine pain scoring
- Enables consistent pain scoring, even by different team members
- Easy to interpret providing clarity on when additional analgesia is required
- The Glasgow CMPS-Feline is available as a mobile application or paper form.

Importantly in practice, it is quick and easy to complete.¹

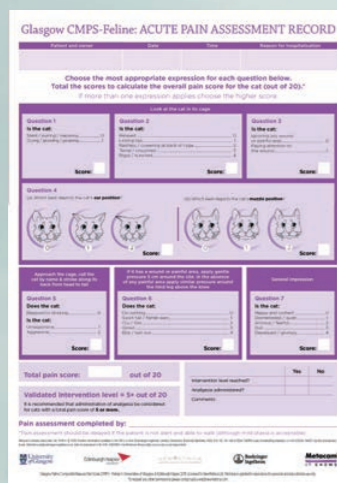


Glasgow CMPS-Feline App



- Assessing pain in cats has never been quicker or easier to complete using the Glasgow CMPS-Feline app
- Can be downloaded directly to any type of mobile device, tablet, or computer

- Saves time and simple to use
- Automatically calculates the pain score
- Allows you to share and send PDF copies of the completed results as an email for easy attachment to your patient records



Also available as a paper form



Download the web app onto your device to make it accessible at any time.
www.metacam-painscale.co.uk/install



How to use pain scales in practice?



The Glasgow CMPS-Feline is validated for measuring acute pain in cats and should be used after any potentially acutely painful episode or procedure.^{1,8,9}



Recommendations for using the scale in practice

- Pain score cats following recovery from procedures**
 - Ensure patient is alert and able to walk before pain scoring (mild ataxia is acceptable)
 - It is generally recommended that pain scoring does not take place until 2 hours post-extubation
- Any cat with a pain score of 5 or above & should be considered for additional analgesia**
 - If a cat scores greater than 5 but clinically doesn't appear to be in pain, it is always best to give the cat the benefit of the doubt by administering an analgesic
 - If a cat scores less than 5, it shouldn't be denied analgesia based on the score alone if clinical judgement suggests it is painful
- Reassessment frequency will be case dependent**
 - Depending on the procedure, analgesics being used, and their expected duration of action
 - Sometimes pain scoring will be required every 2 hours following particularly painful procedures
 - Cannot predict how different cats will tolerate pain•

A score ≥ 5 out of 20 needs an analgesia review

Veterinary nurses play a vital role in pain management and therefore training them to use the pain scale is essential.

Using Metacam® for post-operative pain in cats



Metacam® 2 mg/ml
solution for injection
for cats

Prior to surgery

Dosage: 0.2 mg/kg
subcutaneously (0.1 ml/kg)



Metacam® 0.5 mg/ml
oral suspension
for cats

Up to 4 days follow-on

Maintenance dose: 0.05 mg/kg
every 24 hours, starting 24 hours after injection

Keep cats pain free, **treat with Metacam®**

For more information on managing acute pain in cats visit the Boehringer Academy [click here](#)
or visit boehringer-academy.co.uk

Download the web app onto your device to make it accessible at any time.

www.metacam-painscale.co.uk/install



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References: 1. Steagall PV, Monteiro BP. *J Feline Med Surg.* 2019;21:25-34. 2. Epstein ME, et al. *J Feline Med Surg.* 2015;17:251-272. 3. Simon BT, et al. *Journal of Small Animal Practice.* 2017;58:543-554. 4. Hunt JR, et al. *Vet Rec.* 2015;176:493. 5. Vetflash survey, February 2019. 6. Väisänen MA, et al. *J Am Vet Med Assoc.* 2007;231:236-242. 7. International Society of Feline Medicine (ISFM). 8. International Cat Care. Cats deserve pain relief too. Provision of analgesia post-neutering in cats: are we doing enough? Available from: <https://icatcare.org/campaigns/cats-deserve-pain-relief-too> [Last accessed September 2019]. 9. Glasgow Composite Measure Pain Scale: CMPS - Feline. Available from: http://www.aprvt.com/uploads/5/3/0/5/5305564/cmp_feline_eng.pdf [Last accessed December 2019]. 10. WSAVA. Global Pain Council Guidelines. Available from: <https://www.wsava.org/guidelines/global-pain-council-guidelines> [Last accessed December 2019]. 11. Calvo G, et al. *Journal of Small Animal Practice.* 2014;55: 622-629.

Metacam® contains meloxicam. UK: POM-V IE: POM. Further information available in the SPC or from Boehringer Ingelheim Animal Health UK Ltd., RG12 8YS, UK. UK Tel: 01344 746959 (sales) or 01344 746957 (technical), IE Tel: 01 291 3985 (all queries). Email: vetenquiries@boehringer-ingelheim.com.

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