

Greater Swiss Mountain Dog Club of America Breed Health Survey 2000 & 2001

GSMDCA Health Committee
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CONCLUSIONS

Swissys, like other large breed dogs, are relatively short-lived, although some Swissys live to be 12 or 13 years of age. Bloat, epilepsy, and splenic torsion are among the most common and most fatal health conditions exhibited by Greater Swiss Mountain Dogs. Of the remaining common conditions, some may have an impact on the quality of life of the Swissy (hip dysplasia, for example), others may also have an impact on the quality of life of owners (urinary incontinence, for example), and some typically have little impact for Swissy or owner (distichiasis and crooked tail, for example). Cancers, while not among the most common conditions of Swissys, were among the most frequent causes of death. Although a majority of Swissys were described as “very friendly,” the presence of Swissys described as having potentially dangerous temperament characteristics reminds Swissy owners and breeders of their responsibility to breed and raise Swissys in ways that promote temperaments and behaviors appropriate to stable working dogs and safe family pets.

Table 14: Temperament

Condition		Total	1-24 mos	25-43 mos	44-64 mos	65-157 mos
		n = 846	n = 213	n = 203	n = 215	n = 215
Temperament: Very Shy	Frequency	10	2	2	5	1
	Percent	1.2	0.9	1.0	2.3	0.5
Temperament: Timid	Frequency	59	21	16	14	8
	Percent	7.0	9.9	7.9	6.5	3.7
Temperament: Reserved	Frequency	131	39	33	27	32
	Percent	15.5	18.3	16.3	12.6	14.9
Temperament: Confident	Frequency	422	121	109	95	97
	Percent	49.9	56.8	53.7	44.2	45.1
Temperament: Protective	Frequency	266	55	82	67	62
	Percent	31.4	25.8	40.4	31.2	28.8
Temperament: Very Friendly	Frequency	572	165	131	125	151
	Percent	67.6	77.5	64.5	58.1	70.2
Temperament: Aggressive	Frequency	15	1	7	4	3
	Percent	1.8	0.5	3.4	1.9	1.4
Temperament: Dog Aggressive	Frequency	59	6	13	21	19
	Percent	7.0	2.8	6.4	9.8	8.8
Temperament: Has Bit a Person	Frequency	15	2	2	9	2
	Percent	1.8	0.9	1.0	4.2	0.9
Temperament: Rage Syndrome	Frequency	3	0	1	2	0
	Percent	0.4	0.0	0.5	0.9	0.0

Appendix A. Stability of Response Rates for the 20 Most Common Conditions										
Disease/Condition	7-15	7-8	6-15	5-23	4-26	Mean	Hi	Lo	Diff	Diff %
Urinary incontinence	11.0	10.9	11.0	11.0	10.8	10.9	11.0	10.8	0.2	1.8%
Panosteitis	4.7	4.7	4.9	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.9	4.7	0.2	4.2%
Licking episodes	17.3	17.9	17.8	17.7	16.7	17.5	17.9	16.7	1.2	6.9%
Cataracts	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.1	0.3	7.0%
Pica	9.1	9.9	9.9	9.7	9.9	9.7	9.9	9.1	0.8	8.2%
Cystitis	8.0	7.8	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.3	8.6	7.8	0.8	9.6%
Osteochondritis dissecans	5.4	5.5	5.1	5.0	5.6	5.3	5.6	5.0	0.6	11.3%
Entropion	2.8	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.8	2.5	0.3	11.5%
Idiopathic seizures	4.6	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.6	4.1	0.5	11.9%
Irritable bowel syndrome	5.1	4.5	4.8	5.0	4.7	4.8	5.1	4.5	0.6	12.4%
Hip dysplasia	9.1	9.4	9.2	9.9	10.6	9.6	10.6	9.1	1.5	15.6%
Distichiasis	19.4	16.9	16.6	17.1	18.3	17.7	19.4	16.6	2.8	15.9%
Food allergies	5.4	6.1	6.4	6.3	5.9	6.0	6.4	5.4	1.0	16.6%
Bloat	5.3	5.5	6.3	6.3	5.6	5.8	6.3	5.3	1.0	17.2%
Umbilical hernia	9.6	8.1	8.1	8.4	8.1	8.5	9.6	8.1	1.5	17.7%
Elbow dysplasia	4.4	3.8	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.4	3.6	0.8	20.7%
Crooked tail	3.7	3.4	3.0	3.2	2.9	3.2	3.7	2.9	0.8	24.7%
Skin allergies	4.6	5.4	4.9	5.2	5.9	5.2	5.9	4.6	1.3	25.0%
Chronic ear infections	3.3	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.6	3.3	2.3	1.0	38.2%
Splenic torsion	4.4	3.3	2.5	2.8	2.9	3.2	4.4	2.5	1.9	59.7%
	n=846	n= 705	n= 607	n=537	n=443					

Appendix B: Survey Instrument (Summary data in italics, rounded to nearest whole percent)

<p>GSMD Health Survey 2000 & 2001)</p> <p>This survey elicits health information about Greater Swiss Mountain Dogs who were living at any time during the years of 2000 and 2001. It is important that a broad representation of the breed be included in the study--including dogs that are healthy as well as those that have various health conditions. Dogs deceased before January 1, 2000 and dogs born on or after January 1, 2002 are NOT eligible for inclusion in the study. Individual survey responses are anonymous and all information will be presented in aggregate form. DO NOT submit a hard copy form if an on-line survey has already been submitted for this dog. Co-owners should work together to ensure that each dog is entered only once. Complete a separate survey for each dog.</p>

<p>1. CHARACTERISTICS OF DOG</p> <p>1.01 Sex of this dog : <i>Females--444 (53%)</i> <i>Males--402 (47%)</i></p> <p>1.02 Dog's year of birth (list year): <i>Median age of 775 living Swissys = 42 months</i></p> <p>1.03 Dog's birth month (list month):</p> <p>1.04 Dog's year of death, if applicable (list year): <i>Median age of 71 Swissys that had died = 81 months</i></p> <p>1.05 Dog's month of death, if applicable (list month):</p> <p>1.06 Dog's cause of death, if applicable (write in cause): <i>Most common causes were cancer, gastrointestinal, and neurologic</i></p> <p>1.07 Indicate the reproductive status of this dog (check status) 33%(a) Intact with no attempted breedings 16%(b) Intact with attempted breedings 42% (c) Neutered before any attempted breedings 10% (d) Neutered after any attempted breedings 6% <i>Missing information</i></p> <p>1.08 Indicate which of these tests or procedures this dog has undergone. 55% (a) Hip x-ray 28% (b) Shoulder x-ray 44% (c) Elbow x-ray 10% (d) Prophylactic gastropexy (stomach tacked before any bloat episode)</p>	<p>Indicate whether this dog has a history of the conditions below: (check conditions)</p> <p>2. COLORING CONDITIONS 2% (a) Blue eyes 1% (b) Blue coat main color 2% (c) Red/brown coat main color ___ (d) Other (list below):</p> <p>3. EXTERNAL CONGENITAL 10% (a) Umbilical hernia 1% (b) Cleft lip or palate ___ (c) Other (list below):</p> <p>4. GASTROINTESTINAL 5% (a) Irritable bowel syndrome <1%(b) Intussuception 5% (c) Gastric dilatation and volvulus (bloat) 4% (d) Splenic torsion 1% (e) Megaesophagus 17% (f) Violent licking episodes 9% (g) Pica (eats non-food items often) ___ (h) Other (list below):</p> <p>5. ORTHOPEDIC CONDITIONS 9% (a) Hip dysplasia 5% (b) Osteochondritis dissecans (OCD) 5% (c) Panosteitis 2% (d) Cruciate ligament tear(s) 2% (e) Patellar luxation 4% (f) Elbow dysplasia 1% (g) Spinal myelopathy</p>	<p>1% (h) Cervical vertebral instability (wobblers) 1% (i) Luxating tarsus (popping hock) 1% (j) Intervertebral disc disease 4% (k) Crooked tail (kink) <1% (l) Hypertrophic osteodystrophy (HOD) ___ (m) Other (list below):</p> <p>6. NEUROLOGIC CONDITIONS 0% (a) Aseptic meningitis <1% (b) Bacterial meningitis 0% (c) Viral meningitis <1% (d) Hydrocephalus 0% (e) Hypomyelination (tremblers) 1% (f) Seizures of known cause (list causes below): 5% (g) Seizures without a cause (idiopathic epilepsy) 2% (h) Fly-snapping behavior ___ (i) Other (list below)</p> <p>7. EYE AND EAR CONDITIONS 3% (a) Entropion <1% (b) Ectropion 0% (c) Ectopic cilia 19% (d) Distichiasis (extra lashes) 4% (e) Cataract(s) <1% (f) Progressive retinal atrophy (PRA) 0% (g) Optic nerve hypoplasia 1% (h) Ear hematomas 3% (i) Chronic ear infections ___ (j) Other (list below):</p>
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<p>8. SKIN CONDITIONS</p> <p>2% (a) Chronic hot spots</p> <p><1% (b) Seborrhea</p> <p>1% (c) Demodectic mange</p> <p><1% (d) Sarcoptic mange</p> <p>1% (e) Persistent staphylococcal infection (pyoderma)</p> <p>5% (f) Food allergies</p> <p>5% (g) Skin allergies (atopic dermatitis)</p> <p>2% (h) Nasal allergies (allergic rhinitis)</p> <p>0% (i) Sebaceous adenitis</p> <p>0% (j) Pemphigus foliaceus</p> <p><1% (k) Calcinosis circumscripta</p> <p><1% (l) Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE)</p> <p>0% (m) Alopecic syndromes (color dilution)</p> <p>0% (n) Uveodermatologic syndrome (eye and skin)</p> <p>___ (o) Other (list below)</p>	<p>0% (e) Selective IgM deficiency</p> <p>0% (f) Autoimmune hemolytic anemia</p> <p><1% (g) Idiopathic thrombocytopenia purpura (ITP)</p> <p>0% (h) Polyarteritis nodosa</p> <p>___ (i) Other (list below)</p> <p>11. ENDOCRINE CONDITIONS</p> <p>0% (a) Diabetes mellitus (sugar diabetes)</p> <p>1% (b) Pancreatitis</p> <p>0% (c) Cushing's disease</p> <p><1% (d) Addison's disease</p> <p>0% (e) Pituitary disorder (list cause below):</p> <p>1% (f) Hypothyroidism (low thyroid)</p> <p><1% (g) Hyperthyroidism (excessive thyroid)</p> <p>___ (h) Other (list below)</p>	<p><1% (d) Murmur</p> <p>0% (e) Patent ductus arteriosus</p> <p>___ (f) Other (list below)</p> <p>15. FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE</p> <p>7% (a) Irregular heats</p> <p>4% (b) Refusal to accept male</p> <p>19% (c) Failure to conceive</p> <p>2% (d) Mastitis (bad milk)</p> <p>20% (e) Difficulty whelping</p> <p>38% (f) Caesarean section</p> <p>3% (g) Vaginal infection</p> <p>3% (h) Pyometria</p> <p>___ (i) Other female reproductive conditions (list below)</p> <p>16. MALE REPRODUCTIVE</p> <p>5% (a) Lack of interest in female</p> <p>0% (b) Impotence (inability to breed willing female)</p> <p>9% (c) Sterility (no or low sperm)</p> <p>4% (d) Abnormal sperm</p> <p>1% (e) Undescended testicle or testicles</p> <p>6% (f) Prostatitis</p> <p>___ (g) Other (list below)</p>
<p>9. CANCER</p> <p>1% (a) Mammary gland (breast cancer)</p> <p>1% (b) Skin, subcutaneous tissue</p> <p>1% (c) Mouth (list type of tumor below)</p> <p><1% (d) Osteosarcoma</p> <p><1% (e) Leukemia</p> <p><1% (f) Lymphoma</p> <p>0% (g) Fibrosarcoma</p> <p><1% (h) Hemangiosarcoma</p> <p><1% (i) Cutaneous histiocytosis</p> <p>0% (j) Systemic histiocytosis</p> <p><1% (k) Malignant histiocytosis</p> <p>2% (l) Mast cell tumor(s)</p> <p>___ (m) Other cancers (list below)</p>	<p>12. KIDNEY CONDITIONS</p> <p>8% (a) Cystitis (urinary tract infection)</p> <p><1% (b) Familial glomerulonephropathy</p> <p><1% (c) Kidney stones</p> <p>11% (d) Urinary incontinence</p> <p><1% (e) Renal dysplasia</p> <p>___ (f) Other kidney or urinary tract conditions (list below)</p> <p>13. LIVER CONDITIONS</p> <p>0% (a) Portosystemic shunt</p> <p>0% (b) Chronic active hepatitis (not infectious)</p> <p>___ (c) Other (list below)</p>	<p>17. TEMPERAMENT</p> <p>1% (a) Very shy</p> <p>7% (b) Timid</p> <p>16% (c) Reserved</p> <p>50% (d) Confident</p> <p>31% (e) Protective</p> <p>68% (f) Very friendly</p> <p>2% (g) Aggressive</p> <p>7% (h) Dog aggressive</p> <p>2% (i) Has bit a person</p> <p><1% (j) Rage syndrome</p> <p>___ (k) Other (list below)</p>
<p>10. BLOOD CONDITIONS</p> <p>1% (a) Anemia (list cause below)</p> <p>0% (b) Hemophilia</p> <p><1% (c) von Willebrand's disease</p> <p>0% (d) Factor I deficiency (dysfibrinogenemia)</p>	<p>14. HEART CONDITIONS</p> <p>0% (a) Mitral valve defect</p> <p>0% (b) Tricuspid valve defect</p> <p><1% (c) Stenosis (list type below)</p>	<p>18. Please add any additional information pertinent to this dog's health:</p> <p>THANK YOU!</p>