



## Interesting Case from our web site [www.fairfield-vets.co.uk](http://www.fairfield-vets.co.uk)



### "Smithy" - Collie with Epilepsy



Smithy

Epilepsy is one of the most common neurological disorders in dogs. It is an episodic illness caused by repeated abnormal electrical activity of neurons in the brain and has a very wide variety of clinical signs.

Full blown seizures or convulsions are amongst the most well recognised features of this condition and can be very disconcerting to witness.

People affected with epilepsy usually have no recollection of any seizure and do not appear to experience any pain. This would also appear to be the case in dogs.

If provoked sufficiently any brain can elicit a seizure. Therefore, an animal may experience a single seizure as a sign of transient cerebral overload. Only if seizures become recurrent and are not provoked by systemic disease, is the animal diagnosed with idiopathic epilepsy.

Epilepsy has been recognised in man since ancient Greek times and has had a variety of suggested treatments including exorcism, blood letting and mistletoe! Epilepsy is now thought to be self limiting in

up to 40% of canine cases and in humans is considered to resolve spontaneously or with medication in the majority of patients. My own brother experienced a number of childhood convulsions which subsequently disappeared.

Despite this however, patients experiencing prolonged or a cluster of seizures benefit from early treatment to avoid brain damage. Border collies in particular can be difficult to control and often require a combination of drugs.

Bromide which was the very first human anticonvulsant (1850) has recently been revived within the last 20 years to be used as a combination therapy alongside phenobarbitone which remains the drug of first choice for our canine patients.

Whilst the treatment of canine epilepsy can be very involved it can also be very rewarding. If the disease symptoms can be controlled with medication so that fitting episodes are very infrequent then the patient can lead a very full and active life.

"Smithy" Roberts is a high grade athlete that is currently performing agility trials to a very high standard. His owner, Great Britain canine agility coach, feels perfectly comfortable training him alongside his other dogs who have international status. It is hoped that one day despite his condition "Smithy" may well represent his country in agility competition!

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This article is available on the Fairfield Veterinary Centre web site at [www.fairfield-vets.co.uk](http://www.fairfield-vets.co.uk)

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