

Swedish Vallhund health research – international participation needed

Our research group is running an international study on paroxysmal dyskinesia in the Swedish Vallhund. The aim of the project is to better understand this condition and to support the long-term health of the breed.

We have recently made important progress. **Our preliminary results suggest a link between dyskinesia and a specific brain gene risk variant. Interestingly, the same gene may also influence personality and behaviour in dogs.** This possible connection between movement disorders and behaviour is still not well understood and requires further investigation with larger and more diverse data.

So far, most samples have come from Finland. Only a small number of samples have been received from Sweden and other countries, and awareness of the study is still limited outside Finland. To understand the breed as a whole, participation from multiple countries is essential.

How you can help:

- Blood samples from Swedish Vallhunds

We are looking for blood samples from both healthy dogs and dogs with dyskinesia or epilepsy. Dogs from Sweden and outside Finland are especially important at this stage. All participants will receive their dog's genetic test result by email once the study is completed. Instructions (in English): <https://koirangeenit.fi/en/participate/>

- Questionnaire for dogs with dyskinesia episodes (in English)

If your dog has episodes suggestive of dyskinesia or epilepsy, please complete our Epilepsy and dyskinesia survey. You can find the link at <https://koirangeenit.fi/en/dyskinesia/>

- Behaviour and personality questionnaire for all Swedish Vallhunds (in English)

Because the gene we are studying may affect both dyskinesia and personality, we need behavioural data from both healthy dogs and dogs with symptoms. You can find the link at <https://koirangeenit.fi/en/dyskinesia/>

This study depends on collaboration between owners, breeders, breed clubs, and researchers. By participating or sharing this information, you can help ensure that Swedish Vallhunds from different countries are represented and that the results benefit the breed as a whole.

Thank you for your support and for helping us spread the word.

Best regards,

Hannes Lohi, prof.

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