

# ORCHARD HILLS VETERINARY HOSPITAL

## SENILITY IN DOGS OR "DOGMENTIA"

### (Canine Cognitive Dysfunction CCD)

Pet owners have long been frustrated by age related behavioral changes in their older dogs. These include—house training problems, memory loss, confusion, staring, wandering, getting stuck in corners, sleep disorders, restlessness, barking, separation anxiety etc. etc.

These changes are not always “normal aging” - Many such dogs are actually suffering from Canine Cognitive Dysfunction (CCD). Recent studies have shown that majority of dogs with this illness show the same pattern of brain abnormalities as human patients with Alzheimer's disease.

#### **Treatments & Dietary changes.**

There are several drugs which may help this condition as well as dietary changes and environmental enrichment. Some drug therapy and dietary changes may take a few weeks to take effect and Veterinary advice is necessary, but the wait can be well worth while.

Dietary changes may include a formulation of dry food made specifically for this condition which is a completely balanced diet. They also contain antioxidants such as omega-3 and Vit E—Improvements are usually seen within 2-8 weeks.

#### **Environmental Enrichment:**

Just because a dog is old does NOT mean that he can't learn new things. Use your dog's intelligence to improve the quality of his life.

If your dog's vision is still good, teach signals. This will serve as a back-up if hearing fails, which it often does. Signals are fun for dogs, and a more natural way of communicating than words. Grooming & touching will help your dog cope with vision & hearing loss.

The combination of diet changes and environmental enrichment provided the best results in CCD especially with regard to learning ability.

Don't forget that before assuming your dog has CCD it is important for him/her to be thoroughly checked for any other physical conditions which may be playing a part, e.g arthritis, cardiac conditions etc.

So don't give up on your old friend just yet. Help may be available—after all, they has been faithful to you for a long time.

P.S. Take your old dog for a short walk every day as long as they is willing & able—just don't overdo it! The 'smells' act as environmental enrichment and the exercise will help keep your old friend's joints in working order.

Please don't hesitate to ring for advice on any of the above. (02) 4736 2027