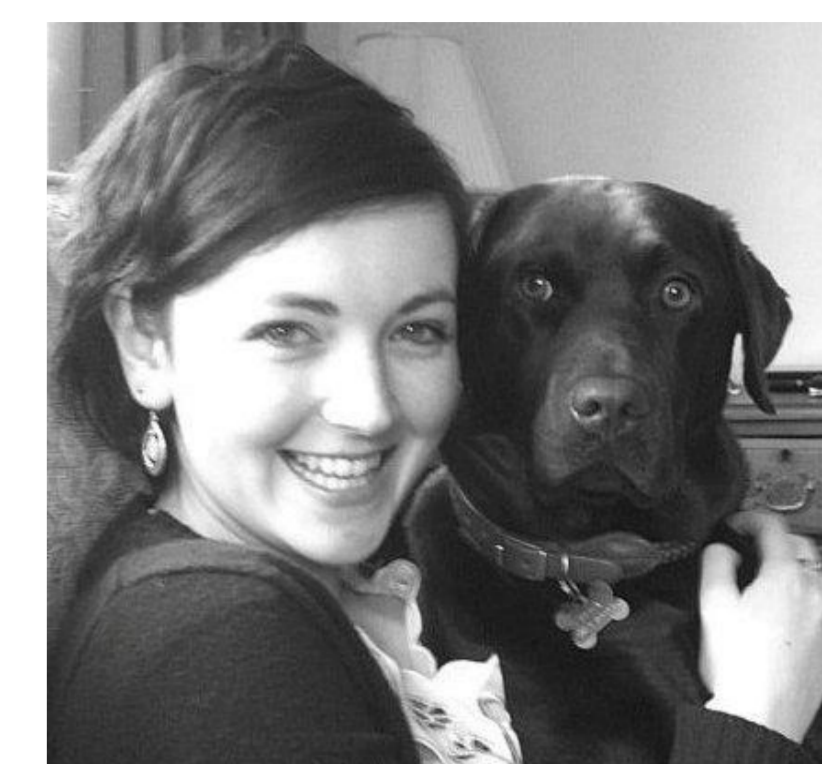


CENTRE FOR EVIDENCE-BASED
VETERINARY MEDICINE
Putting research into practice

Common conditions of pedigree dogs: vet and breeder opinions



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Introduction: Pedigree dog health and welfare is a contentious issue. Little evidence exists on the opinions of pedigree dog breeders and veterinary surgeons towards the health problems most commonly encountered in pedigree dogs¹. It is also unknown if their opinions are the same or different. Such information is important for improving education and communication between these two groups to positively influence pedigree dog welfare.

Aims:

- To identify vets' and breeders' opinions on the most common problematic body systems encountered in each of the 10 most registered breeds in the UK.
- To identify the body systems thought to have the biggest impact on the welfare of each breed.

Methods:

- Pedigree dog breeders were recruited through the Champdogs website
- Veterinary surgeons were recruited via an existing contact list and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons' Register of Practices
- Data were collected by electronic SurveyMonkey questionnaires
 - Descriptive analysis was carried out
- Vets and breeders were asked:
 - To rate the most common problematic body systems per breed
 - To identify the body systems that have the biggest impact on welfare

Results:

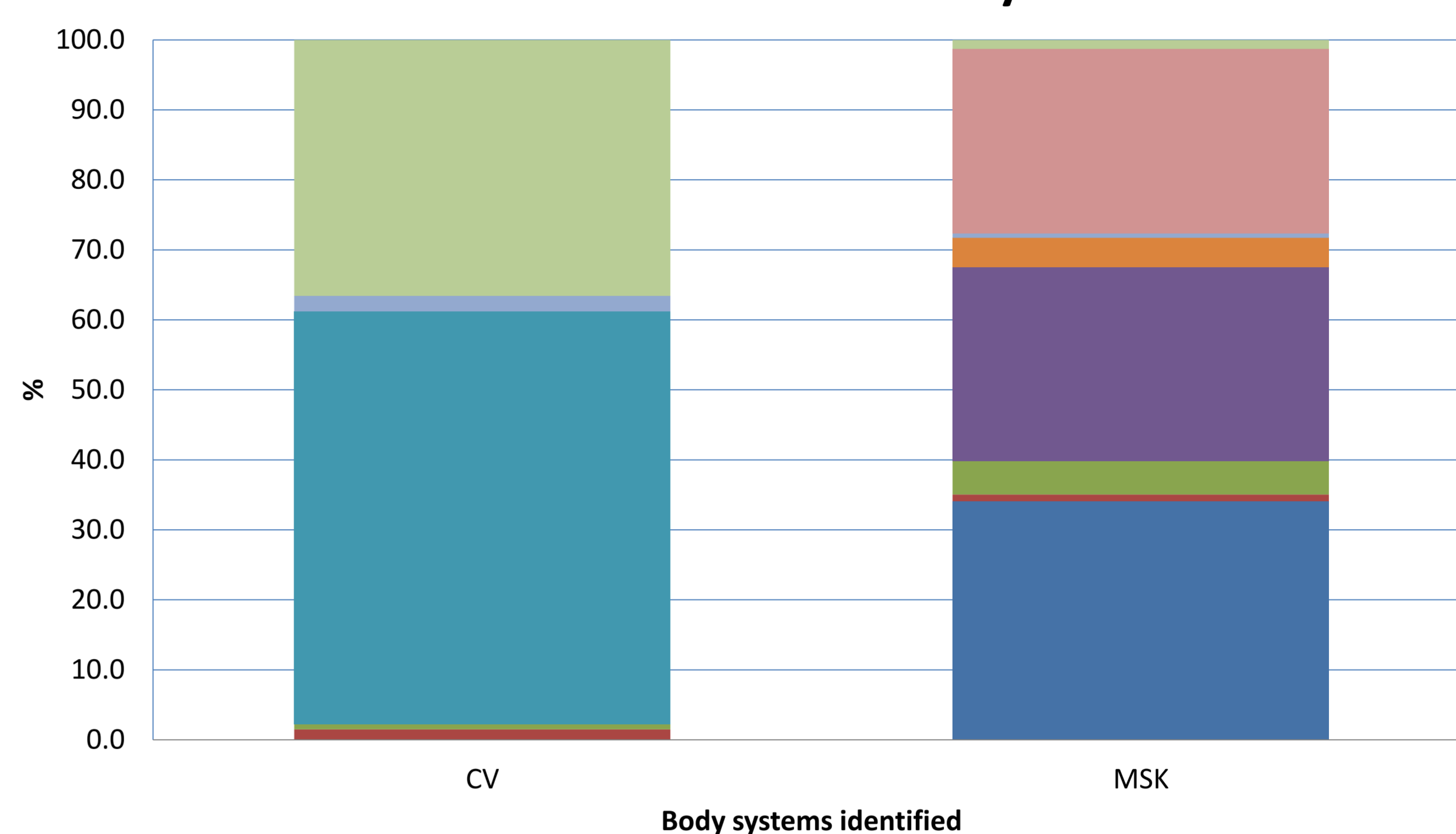
- Responses were received from 198 veterinary surgeons and 385 pedigree dog breeders.
 - Questionnaires from 150 of the vets and 351 of the breeders were suitable for analysis
- Breeders and vets opinions were the same for the top conditions in some breeds but not for others [Table 1]
- Breeders and vets opinions also differed on body systems impacting on welfare [Figure 1]

Table 1: Most frequently chosen body systems reported to cause health problems in each of the ten breeds, based on veterinary surgeon and pedigree dog breeder opinion.

Breed	Body systems	
	Veterinary Surgeons	Pedigree Dog Breeders
Labrador Retrievers	MSK (35.8%, n=135)	MSK/OC (32.2%, n=49)
Cocker Spaniels	DERM (29.5%, n=110)	OC (33.3%, n=36)
English Springer Spaniels	DERM (24.3%, n=83)	OC (30.8%, n=20)
German Shepherd Dogs	MSK (32.6%, n=123)	MSK (27.3%, n=39)
Staffordshire Bull Terriers	DERM (30.4%, n=103)	OC (26.7%, n=16)
Cavalier King Charles Spaniels	CV (33.3%, n=125)	CV (32.6%, n=31)
Golden Retrievers	MSK (32.4%, n=117)	MSK (25%, n=41)
West Highland White Terriers	DERM (38.5%, n=139)	*
Boxers	CV (25.8%, n=96)	CV (37.9%, n=36)
Border Terriers	DERM (20.1%, n=64)	*

MSK = Musculoskeletal; DERM = Dermatological; CV = Cardiovascular; OC = Ocular; * = results too low to be reported (≤ 8 respondents)

1.a - Conditions identified by vets



1.b - Conditions identified by breeders

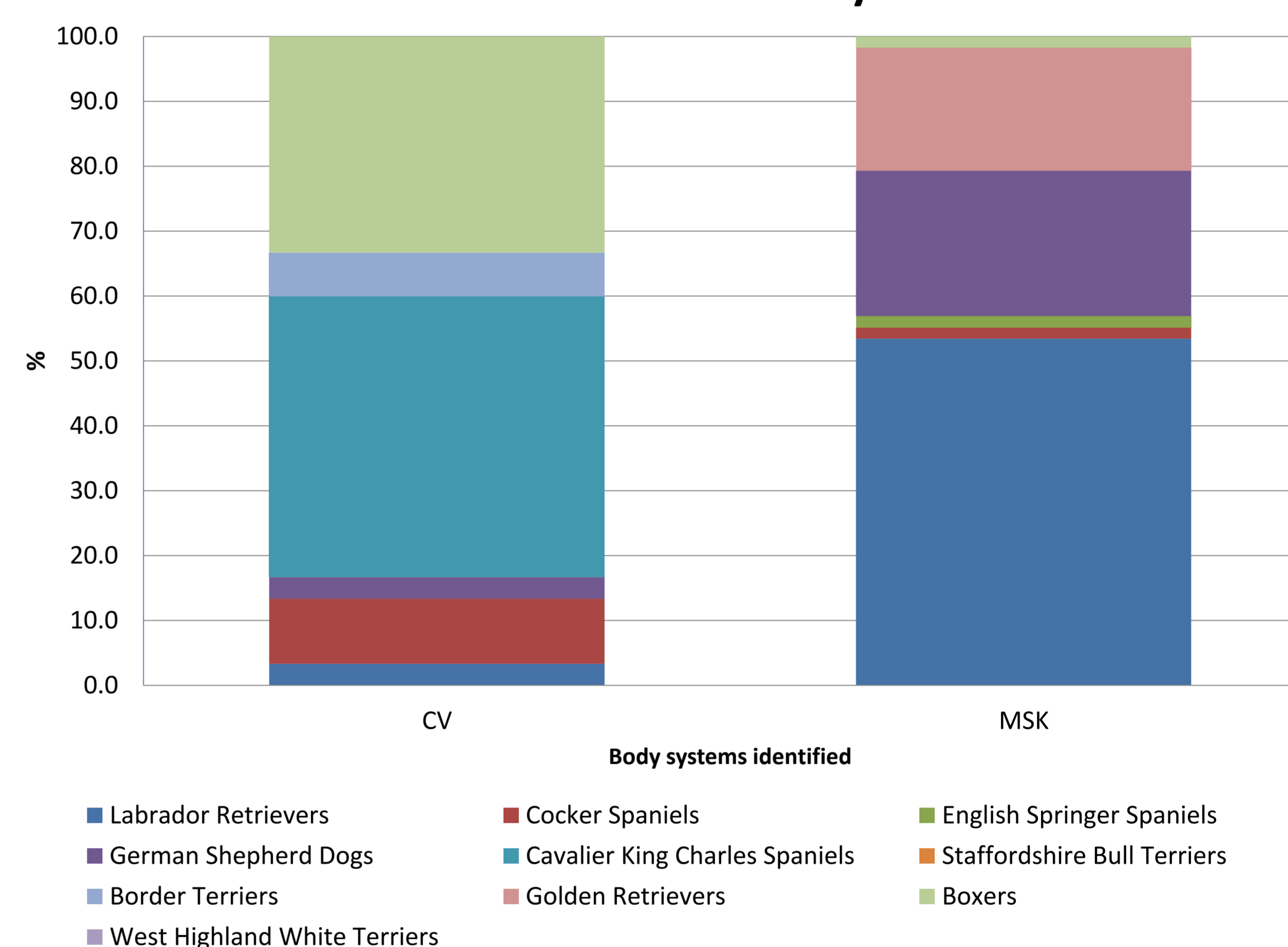


Figure 1: Conditions perceived to have the biggest impact on the welfare of each of the ten most registered breeds in the United Kingdom, based on veterinary surgeon (1.a) and pedigree dog breeder (1.b) opinion. CV = Cardiovascular; MSK = Musculoskeletal.

Conclusions:

- Vets and breeders appear to have different opinions on issues concerning pedigree dog health.
 - Pedigree dog breeders appear to focus on body systems effected by inherited conditions.
 - Veterinary surgeons appear to focus on body systems effected by both acquired and inherited conditions.
- Further research is required to explore the complexities behind these differences in opinion.

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References: ¹ KC/BSAVA Purebred Dog Health Survey 2004

