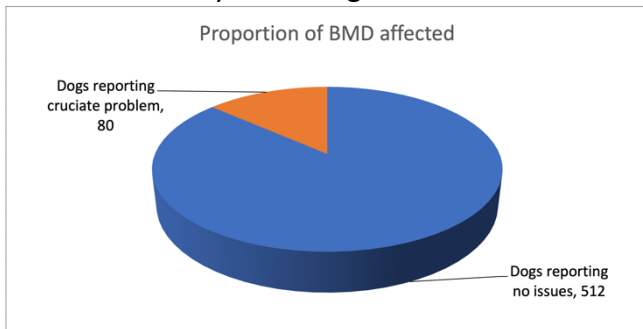


## BHI Cruciate Ligament Survey - Results Extract

As some members will recall the BHI carried out a Breed Cruciate Ligament survey from last year into this. We would like to thank the owners who took the trouble to respond to the survey. To give correct context it was vital that as many people as possible responded whether they had encountered Cruciate problems in their Bernese or not. I would also like to thank Donna Hughes for collating the data on a very detailed spreadsheet and producing most of the summarised data below.

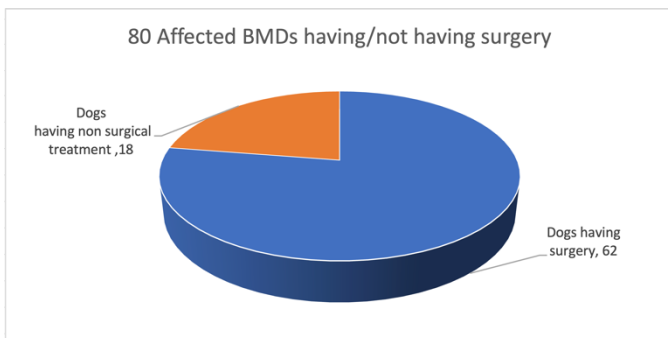
The following are just some of the findings of the survey. We can never know just how accurately reflective of the true full picture surveys are. No one can say for sure so we can only take the data as gathered.

592 dogs were submitted to the survey and of these 80, or 13.5%, registered some kind of Cruciate problem. However, only 51 of these 80 supplied full details so the more detail we extract the lower the numbers we may be talking about.



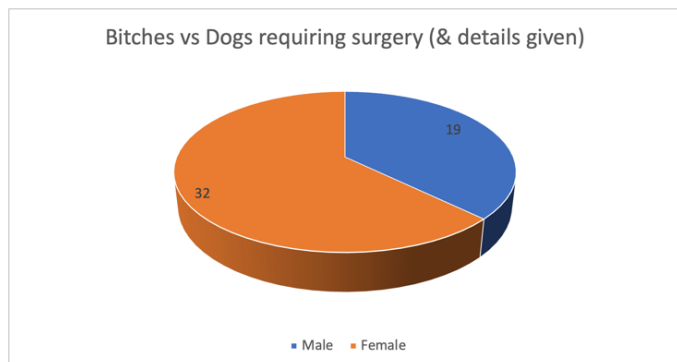
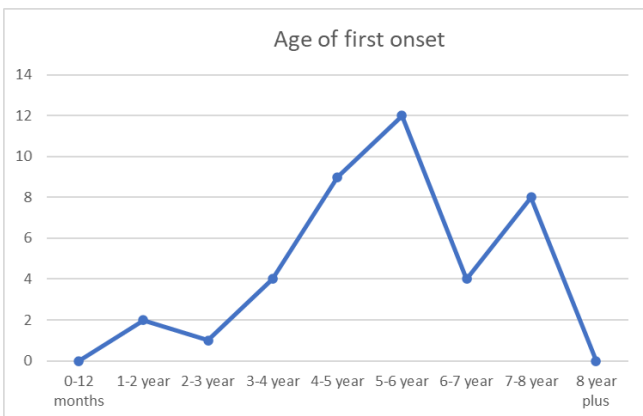
So taking this as a representative sample, we can flip this around to say that 86.5% of BMD should not experience any cruciate problem.

Having estimated the scale of the problem, looking for any patterns or links between those affected was a further part of the survey's aim.

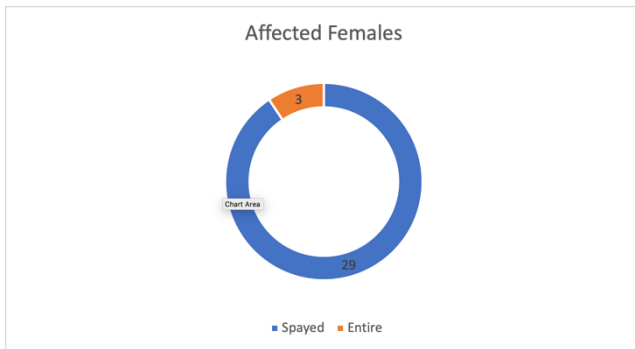
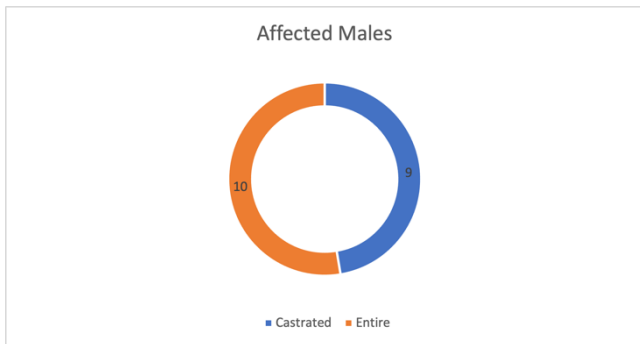


Of the 80 dogs 52 reported having a surgical intervention and 18 were treated only by non surgical means.

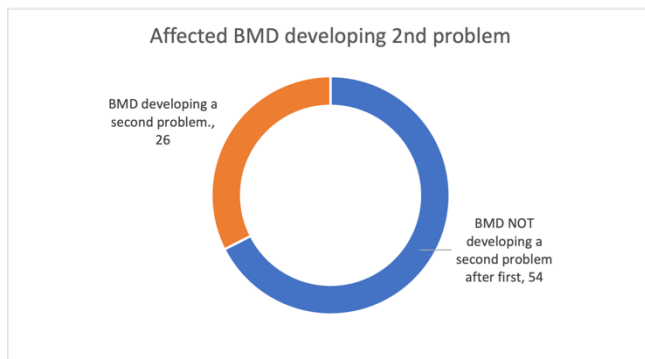
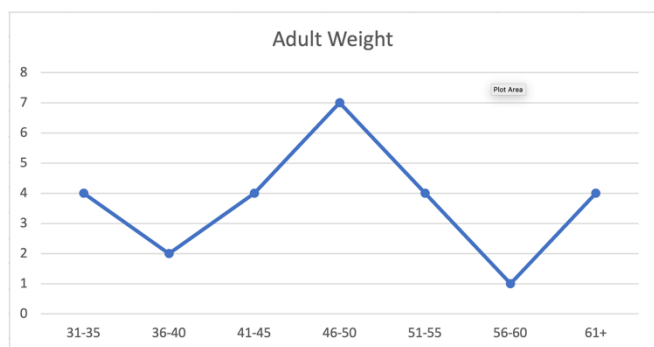
The age of first onset was also fairly spread although there was a peak around 5-6 years old and no dogs reported developing Cruciate problems after 8 years old. Moving on to look more at the 51 affected dogs we were given details of, it appears there was something of a bias towards females being more affected than males in that nearly two thirds of the BMDs requiring surgery were females.



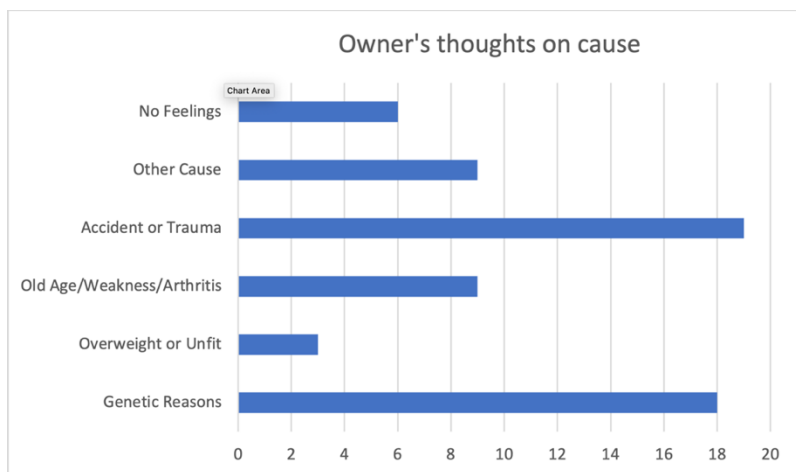
Looking further into these two groups it may appear the significance of being neutered is far more pronounced in bitches than dogs. The 19 males were as even as they could be but the 32 females only contained 3 entire bitches which means 91% of affected females were spayed bitches.



Looking at weights of dogs affected with the spread probably not too far away from the spread of weights you'd expect to see. 32.5% of BMDs experiencing a Cruciate problem went on to develop a problem in their other leg.



Attempting to tap into the perception and knowledge in the breed the survey also asked owners if they had any thoughts on this condition, why their dogs were affected or unaffected.



The two opinions clearly in front of the others were that it was due to a trauma incident or that it was a hereditary condition. Clearly more information would be needed to investigate any of these opinions but I have been at presentations on this subject where the experts have stated that a healthy cruciate ligament on a well exercised dog is not easily prone to damage.

Dogs Giving Summary of Feeding regime		
Complete kibble	19	46%
Raw	9	22%
Kibble and Wet	9	22%
Mixed	3	7%
Vegetarian	1	2%

The requests for information on exercise regimes, revealed no real pattern with the vast majority of dogs having either one or two walks a day and falling between 30 and 60 minutes per day.

The 41 affected dogs who gave us a summary of their feeding regime produced nearly half only feeding kibble and 'Raw' and a mixture of 'Raw and Wet food' making up almost the same number.

This could well be fairly typical of the general population but we have no way of knowing for sure.

Looking at the overall results it is very clear that obtaining more information about the unaffected dogs would have been extremely helpful to give some context to some of these figures, without which we can only guess at their significance. For example looking at the spread of weights of affected dogs or the

feeding regimes we have no data to say whether these are in line with the general population or not. However, I think most people would say these could well be fairly representative of the general population returns which means these figures would not be meaningful for the cruciate figures.

Overall perhaps the only surprising figure to me would be the 91% of bitches affected being neutered bitches but again, how untypical of the general population is this actually? What percentage of adult bitches are spayed bitches? It could well be approaching that figure, or at least a fairly high figure, in which case the figure loses its significance.

We have more extractions and summaries to do with the information (later in the year) and then we will seek some expert opinion on whether any issue has a case take it further. I will also seek any similar surveys out both across the Bernese world and other breeds in the UK to look for any kind of reference data to give more context and help us decide if we have any notable figures.

Steve Green  
Breed Health CoOrdinator, BHI