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### **EFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT OF A COMPLEMENTARY FEED FOR DOGS WITH CHRONIC JOINT DISORDERS DURING 8 WEEKS OF ADMINISTRATION: AN OPEN-LABEL FIELD STUDY**

Osteoarthritis is a common degenerative disorder in ageing dogs. The objective of this study was to investigate the efficiency of a feed supplement intended to support joint function (Fortiflex®, Virbac, Carros, France), in dogs with mobility impairments.

Dogs with mobility disorders for at least 3 months and with no treatment for at least 2 months before the study start were included. They had alterations of at least 3 of these 7 parameters (scored from 1 (normal) to 4 (serious alteration)): interactions with people; rise from lying down; walk or run; lameness; walk on stairs; play; or jump on bed/coach/car. Dogs were given the feed supplement once daily for 8 weeks and parameters were evaluated at W2, W4 and W8. The difficulties to rise; walk or run; walk on stairs; play; and jump were also rated from 0 (no difficulty) to 10 (extremely difficult) at initiation and end of administration (W8). A Friedman test was used to evaluate the changes of parameters over time and a comparison between each time point and baseline was done using a Wilcoxon signed-rank test.

Sixty-one dogs, with an average age and weight of 12 years and 18.7 kg were included and analysed. All 7 mobility scores were significantly improved during the study period ( $p < 0.05$ ). Some of them were significantly improved after only 2 weeks of administration. All marks given for the 5 difficulties rated, decreased significantly from Day 0 to W8, except for the difficulty to play. According to pet owners, the mobility of dogs was improved by 74% at the end of the study period. The product was well accepted by the dogs (mean note = 8.30/10). No serious adverse events were recorded during the study.

This feed supplement improved joint functions of dogs and can be used safely in dogs with mobility disorders.