

# Piedmont Animal Health and WFIRM look to create brighter future for cats with kidney disease

GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA, USA, April 7, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A novel therapeutic agent for chronic kidney disease (CKD) in cats is highlighted in the March 2021 issue of *Frontiers in Veterinary Science*. The treatment is the result of a collaboration between [Piedmont](#) Animal Health and the Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine (WFIRM). CKD is a progressive and debilitating condition commonly seen in older cats. Currently, there are no available treatments to reverse its quality-of-life robbing effects.

Through the Piedmont-WFIRM collaboration, an intrarenal injection of a recombinant human chemokine, CXCL-12, is being evaluated. The innovative therapy was investigated in two preclinical studies and one clinical study. Results of the two preclinical studies showed that CXCL-12 restored normal kidney structure to cats with clinically induced fibrosis, and provided evidence exhibiting how the treatment acts to address the changes in the kidney associated with CKD damage. A subsequent clinical pilot study demonstrated the feasibility of administering CXCL-12 with no obvious side effects over the 9-month study period.

This development program is symbolic of Piedmont Animal Health's innovative approaches to advancing disease areas for which current solutions are suboptimal.

"With WFIRM in our backyard, and a combined interest in raising the standard of care, it was natural for the two of us to work together," said Doug Hepler, PhD, Chief Scientific Officer of Piedmont Animal Health. "These preclinical and clinical study findings suggest that our first collaboration could make a big difference in the lives of cat owners and their beloved pets. Anyone who has had a cat with chronic kidney disease knows how heartbreaking it is to watch their decline and be able to do very little about it. Our goal is to change that story to a much more positive one."

For WFIRM, the collaborative research will hopefully someday lead to treatment for humans who suffer from chronic kidney disease. "Results of these studies together show that intrarenal injection of CXCL12 may be a potential new therapy to treat early kidney disease in cats with a capability for widespread use," said Kouidy Williams, DVM, who leads the research team at WFIRM that includes Julie Bennington, DVM, a research fellow and PhD candidate. "This is a good example of how a disease that is common to both animals and humans can be studied and potentially applied to the disease in humans."

In addition to continuing development of CXCL-12, Piedmont and WFIRM are exploring other potential areas of collaboration. "There is a great opportunity to find better ways to manage a number of serious diseases in animals," said Dr. Hepler. "I look forward to continuing to work with our colleagues at WFIRM to make a significant, positive impact on the way these conditions are treated."

#### About Piedmont Animal Health

Piedmont Animal Health, a North Carolina, US-based company, is led by a team of experienced and proven veterinary pharmaceutical innovators. A leader in innovation, Piedmont is dedicated to developing novel medications that improve compliance and ease of use. Piedmont specializes in inventing, developing, and gaining FDA approval for medications that address unmet needs in animal health. For more information, visit [PiedmontAnimalHealth.com](http://PiedmontAnimalHealth.com)

#### About the Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine

The Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine is recognized as an international leader in translating scientific discovery into clinical therapies, with many world firsts, including the development and implantation of the first engineered organ in a patient. Over 400 people at the institute, the largest in the world, work on more than 40 different tissues and organs. The institute is making a global difference in regenerative medicine through collaborations with over 400 entities and institutions worldwide, through its government, academic and industry partnerships, its start-up entities, and through major initiatives in breakthrough technologies, such as tissue engineering, cell therapies, diagnostics, drug discovery, biomanufacturing, nanotechnology, gene editing and 3D printing.

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