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Booster jabs 'waste of money'

Press Association
guardian.co.uk, Friday 2 April 2004 02.41 BST



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UK news

Dog and cat owners are wasting millions of pounds on unnecessary booster vaccinations, according to 31 vets in an open letter. The surgeons claimed that vaccines administered to domestic pets in annual doses frequently lasted much longer. Treatments for many conditions, including distemper, cat flu and parva virus, sometimes lasted for life, they said.

The letter to the Veterinary Times said: "The present practice of marketing vaccinations for companion animals may constitute fraud by misrepresentation, fraud by silence and theft by deception."

A spokesman for the British Small Animal Veterinary Association, which is holding its annual conference in Birmingham, said: "Vaccination is vital - no other single thing has provided a greater benefit to companion animals."

The spokesman said not all vaccines provided "lifelong immunity", but they were vital in preventing potentially fatal diseases. "We see no evidence to suggest that we should be changing the recommendations that are presented on the data sheets."

Freda Scott-Parker, BSAVA president, dismissed suggestions that repeated vaccines could have an adverse affect on animals.

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