



Helping pets suffering from MRSA

Honourary Patron - Claire Rayner

www.thebellamossfoundation.com

Campaign website – www.pets-mrsa.com

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PRESS RELEASE

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Don't let the vet bugs bite

The Bella Moss Foundation charity today calls for vets to be more diligent about cleanliness of their surgeries to prevent MRSA in pets.

Jill Moss, President of The Bella Moss Foundation, set up the charity after her most beloved companion dog, Bella, died of the human strain of MRSA.

“The country is losing people, babies and now its first recorded pet – we must stop this now.”

Jill, who worked as an actress prior to starting the charity, says “Bella Louise Moss (kennel club name Pricilla Princess) was the most precious friend to me and we were devoted to each other. She was a beautiful 10-year-old Samoyed who talked and was full of life – a celebrity herself who appeared with me on many TV programmes.

“Bella was chasing a squirrel enjoying her day out when she ruptured the cruciate ligament in her knee. What should have been routine surgery ended her life. The London multi chain vets who we trusted for years (Medivet Hendon) have admitted that it was during or after surgery that Bella became infected with the human strain of MRSA and another serious infection, Pseudomonas. Because they did not know about MRSA, they misdiagnosed her symptoms for an allergic reaction to the material inserted into the knee. Bella later died in agony and distress as young, unqualified nursing staff refused to treat her for fear of becoming infected themselves.

“There was no information on MRSA in pets which is why I started the charity.”

When Jill first raised the issue following Bella's death in October 2004 the **British Veterinary Association** said that the alarm being generated was completely unnecessary, but Jill says that Bella's death is the tip of the iceberg and the foundation is contacted by hundreds of owners worldwide – over 300 - and many dogs are becoming infected as well as cats and horses.

DEFRA also recognises the problem and have commented on the success of Jill's campaign to raise awareness on this issue and have invited her to become a member of their DARC scientific committee sub group on MRSA in pets. Jill is the only layperson on the committee.

Jill is calling for new standards to be set for vets including

- Vets to be more diligent about cleanliness
- Vets to have infection control policies
- Vet staff to wash hands between attending animals (or wear gloves)
- Infected animals to be isolated
- Swabs to be taken early as most cases can be successfully treated
- All vets to wear gloves gowns and masks during surgical procedures
- The government to bring in enforceable standards of infection control
- Guidelines for all veterinary practices
- The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to have an independent ombudsmen to oversee complaints of veterinary negligence

Celebrity victims of MRSA supporting the charity

Actress Leslie Ash says, "MRSA is getting out of control"



Jill Moss and Leslie Ash

Claire Rayner President of patients association and Honourary Patron of The Bella Moss Foundation has been helping Jill raise awareness and says, "This is a serious concern to society and we must now prevent levels in animals escalating to that which we see in humans."

Other celebrities including Alex Best are giving their support to the Bella Moss Foundation.

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