

Median Longevity of **CANE CORSO** **ITALIAN DOG BREED** and Its Relationship with Hair Colour

The Cane Corso Italiano (see the photo below) is a direct descendant of Canis Pugnax, molossian dog breed known since ancient Rome and used in guarding and warfare. The breed didn't disappear after the decline of the Roman Empire but it began to be used for hunting and guarding properties.

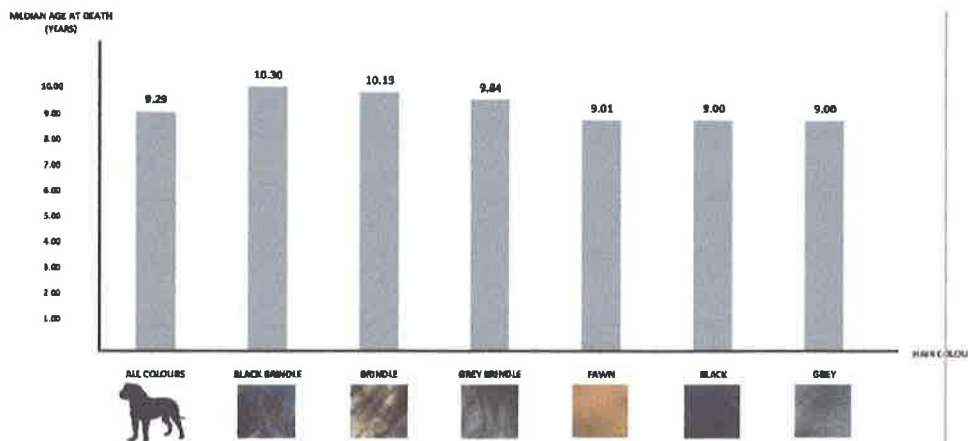


Photograph of a Cane Corso Italiano Dog (Koleta Atison, Evzen Korec's archive)

Ancestors of today's Cane Corso dogs guarded fields and homes of medieval farmers. After transformation and modernization of agriculture, the number of Cane Corso dogs was constantly decreasing and the breed almost became extinct. Few dogs survived in Apulia (a southern province of Italy). A rescue of this breed began in the 70's of the last century. Professor Francesco Ballotta and doctor Antonio Morsiani found 19 Cane Corso dogs and started with cross-breeding. The first breed standard was created in 1987, when about 100 dogs of Cane Corso Italiano breed were registered.

The Cane Corso breed was claimed as an Italian national dog breed by ENCI (organization overarching Italian kennel clubs) in 1994. The International Cynological Federation (FCI), which unites most of developed countries (except USA and UK), officially recognized this breed in 2007. This decision made the Cane Corso dog breed one of the youngest breeds. Cane Corso breed is becoming more popular every year and number of breeders is increasing. This breed is the most represented molosser breed at international dog shows and belongs to 10 most represented breeds of all breeds.

A median lifespan has been determined for most of the recognized dog breeds. A median age at death of Cane Corso breed was determined for the first time by our research group in 2017 and published in the international journal *Open Veterinary Journal* (Korec,



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E., Chalupa, O., Hančl, M., Korcová, J., Bydžovská, M. 2017. Longevity of Cane Corso Italiano dog breed and its relationship with hair colour. *Open Vet. J.* 7(2), 170-173).

In a cooperation with 72 kennels from 25 countries all over the world the median lifespan of Cane Corso dogs we determined for the first time on a statistically significant group of 232 deceased dogs. The median age at death of Cane Corso dogs is 9.29 years. The research showed a surprising result after determining the median age of different colour groups. Our research group determined that the longest living group are black brindle dogs (10.30 years), followed by brindle dogs (10.13 years), grey brindle dogs (9.84 years), fawn dogs (9.01 years), black dogs (9.00 years), grey dogs (9.00 years) and other colour dogs (8.09 years). You can find a summary of determined data in the figure below. The relationship between median lifespan and hair colour was published for the first time in a scientific literature by our research group.

This finding has not only a significant theoretical relevance for a possible identification of genes responsible for longevity, but it is also very important for breeders who want to achieve a life prolongation of their dogs.

Our research group concern is the study of genes related to longevity of the Cane Corso Italiano breed. The participants of our program are dogs who have reached the age of 12 years. We isolate their DNA from cells collected from a mouth buccal swab and then we examine it by molecular genetic methods. We ask all owners, who have twelve-year-old and older Cane Corso Italiano dogs, for participation in this research program. Involving more dogs in the research program will help us to explain longevity. For more information about the research program visit www.koreccorso.cz/en/aims-of-research/

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