Silver Coat Color in Labrador Retrievers & Misconceptions About Acids

DEAR EDITOR:

I read with interest the excellent article **10 Dermatoses to Consider in the Young Patient** (February 2016 issue, page 97). The paper was thorough, concise, informative, and well-illustrated.

I hope to enlighten the author and other readers concerning a statement made about hair coat disorders (select follicular dysplasias) in the Labrador retriever, specifically *color mutant alopecia*. The author states, "The silver Labrador retriever is the newest breed to promote the silver color."

This is not accurate. The Labrador Retriever Club (LRC) of America, the parent club for Labrador retriever breeders, does not encourage nor promote the production of the silver coat color in the Labrador retriever. This is primarily because of the health concerns associated with the expression of the recessive silver gene.

The D locus is the primary locus associated with diluted pigment, which results in coats that would otherwise be black or brown showing up as gray or blue or pale brown. The melanophilin gene was recently shown to be responsible, but not all of the dilute-causing mutations have been identified.

Recognized (ie, acceptable for American Kennel Club registration and competition) coat colors for purebred Labrador retrievers are black, yellow, and chocolate. No shadings of coat color are recognized for black or chocolate Labrador retrievers in the Labrador Standard. Tan-point and brindled black and chocolate Labrador retrievers do occur; this is caused by another recessive trait. The shadings recognized in yellow Labrador retrievers do not depend on the presence of the dilute gene *dd* but are modifiers acting on the *ee* gene. The currently identified coat color genes in the Labrador retriever include:

A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*E*	*g*	*in*	*s*	*i*
|	|	|		|		|		
a	*b*	*c*		*e*		*t*		

The omission of the *d* gene suggests that the silver Labrador retriever is either not a purebred or is the result of breeding 2 purebred Labrador retrievers carrying the recessive silver gene, which has not yet been evaluated.

I am grateful the author provided information about this condition to veterinarians examining this popular breed but hope she will agree that this color is not promoted in the fancy.

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