

Preface



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Guest Editors

To our fellow veterinarians, virologists, diagnosticians, and veterinary students: it is our pleasure to bring to you the latest practical developments in companion animal viruses. Viruses are obligate pathogens, and they are evolving constantly to adapt to their hosts. Viruses are challenged by changes in host immunity, vaccination, and host genetics. Mutants arise during infection cycles in an effort to adapt to challenges, and the viral genome is prone to errors. A clinical specimen contains quasi-species of viruses that are selected by the host immune and tissue environments. The mutation rates of RNA and single-stranded DNA viruses can be extremely high, which can lead to vaccine failures.

In this issue of the *Veterinary Clinics of North America: Small Animal Practice*, we have requested the authors assemble the latest developments in the understanding of companion animal viruses. Several of these authors have contributed to the original discovery and description of new viral diseases that affect various organ systems in companion animals. This issue is organized so that small animal veterinarians can easily find the latest information about clinical signs, diagnosis, epidemiology, vaccination, unique features of novel viruses, and management of viral diseases. Throughout the articles, the authors have shared their wisdom on matters of practical concern and relevance to veterinarians. Because the topics are current, this edition will be a useful supplement to a good textbook in small animal viral diseases.

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