



## LONGEVITY STUDY FINDINGS - 2008

(Sylvine et Ronan VENETZ)

After many months of development, the results of the longevity study launched by the Bulldog Club of France are now available.

We should like to extend our warmest thanks to the breeders and individual pet owners who contributed and, continue to contribute to this study. We understand how difficult it is, even painful, to recall the life of our pets who have left us, sometimes in dramatic circumstances and, often far too soon. Our wish for the close of 2008 is for the results collated from this study to serve as a wide and consensual basis of reflection on the health of the Bulldog and show the motivation of the Bulldog Club of France.

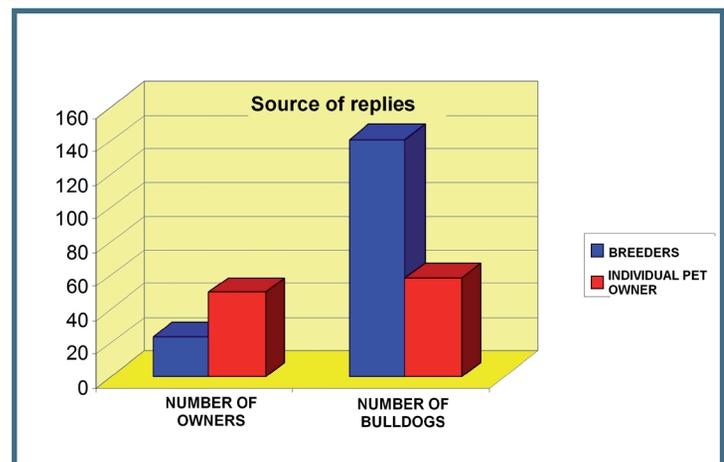
This study used a panel of 200 bulldogs belonging to breeders and individual pet owners. Completed future questionnaires will allow us to refine, confirm or refute the initial findings. Please continue to complete and send the questionnaires to the Club.

### 1. SOURCE OF QUESTIONNAIRE REPLIES

**24 breeders** participated in the study for **141 dogs**, making an average of 6,13 dogs per breeder.

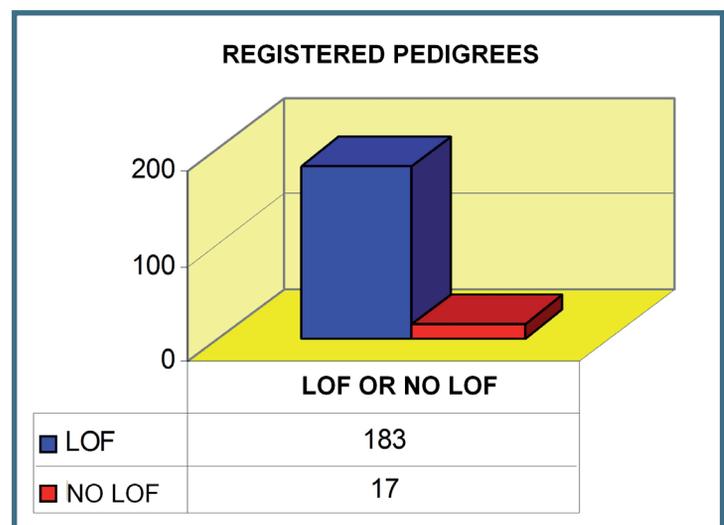
**4 breeders**, alone, completed **89** of the 141 questionnaires for 63.12% of breeders' dogs.

**50 individual pet owners** participated for **59 dogs**.



### 2. PEDIGREE / NO PEDIGREE

**91.5%** of the panel of bulldogs concerned were Pedigree registered in France (LOF)



### 3 - AVERAGE WEIGHT

Average weight at adult age : **25.4 kilos**

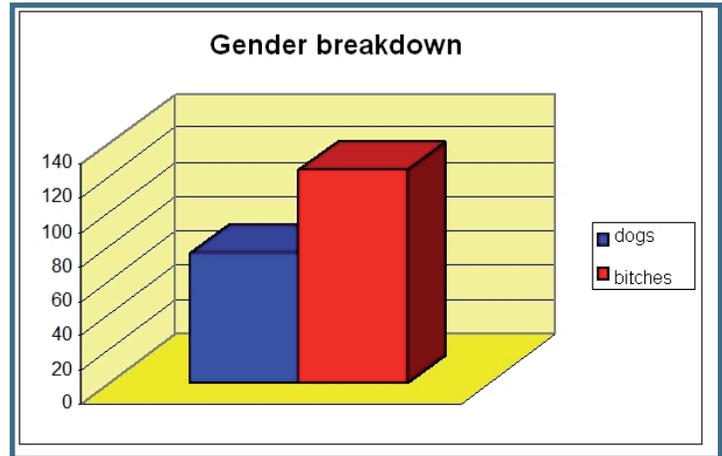
Average weight for an adult dog : **28.2 kilos**

Average weight for an adult bitch : **23.5 kilos**

Does 'standard weight' allow for a longer lifespan? **No**, neither more nor less.

### 4 - GENDER BREAKDOWN

124 bitches (**62%**) and 76 dogs (**32%**)



### 5 - REPRODUCTION

- **Birth – 59.5% by caesarean section; 7% by natural birth; 33.5% not known**
- **Average number of pups per litter: 5.3**
- **Spaying/Neutering :**

12.5% had been spayed/neutered, on average, at 50 months old (4 years and 2 months)

Dogs: 6.5%, were neutered, on average, at 50 months old.

Bitches: 16% were spayed, on average, at 50 months old.

**Number of matings per dog: 5.6 on average.**

**60.5% had never been used at stud.**

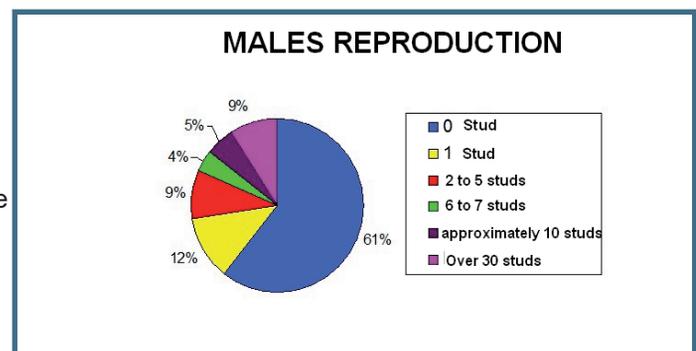
11.8% had been used at stud once.

9.2% had been used at stud between 2 and 5 times.

4% had been used at stud between 6 and 7 times.

4.2% had been used at stud 10 times

**9.2% had been used at stud more than 30 times** (these 7 dogs had done 77.3% of the studs)



**Number of litters for the Bitch: 1.4 on average**

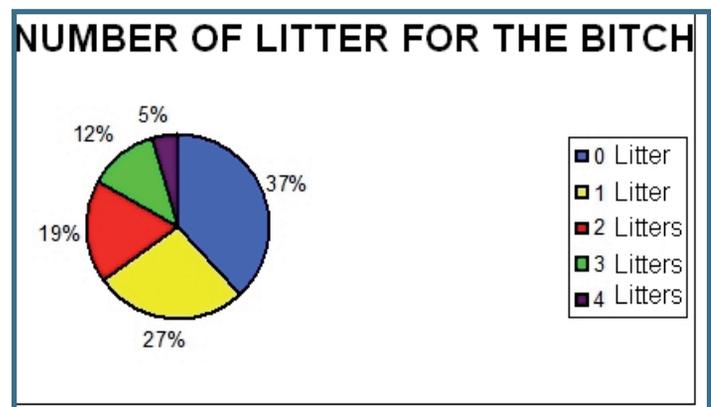
**38% had never produced a litter**

26.6% had produced 1 litter

18.5% had produced 2 litters

12.1% had produced 3 litters

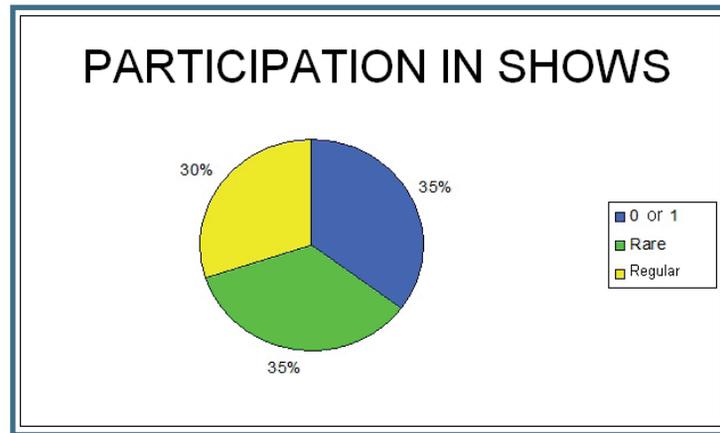
4.8% had produced 4 litters



**Natural Whelping:** according to the replies, **5.7%** whelped naturally



## 6 - PARTICIPATION IN SHOWS

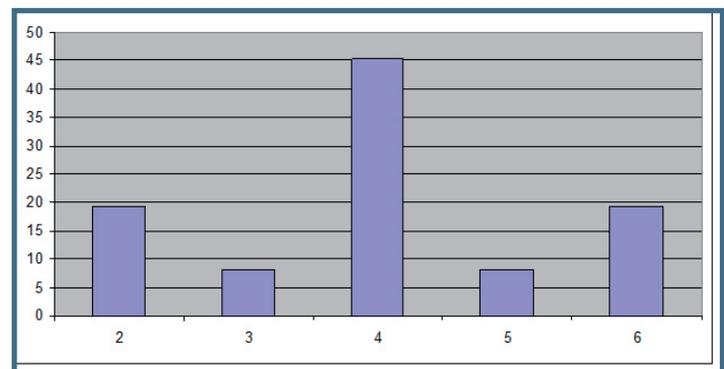


## 7 - GRADING SCHEME (grades appointed subject to the dog fulfilling certain conditions)

38,5% of the dogs were Grade 2 or more.

**TAN** (Natural Aptitude Test - basic fitness and com-  
portment test)

44% of the dogs had obtained the **TAN**  
*Do dogs that have obtained the TAN live longer than  
those that haven't? **NO** neither more nor less*



## 8 - AGE OF DEATH

The average lifespan calculated on the findings is **6.9** years old



Average life expectancy at birth: **6.9** years

Average life expectancy for a dog at birth: 7.1 years

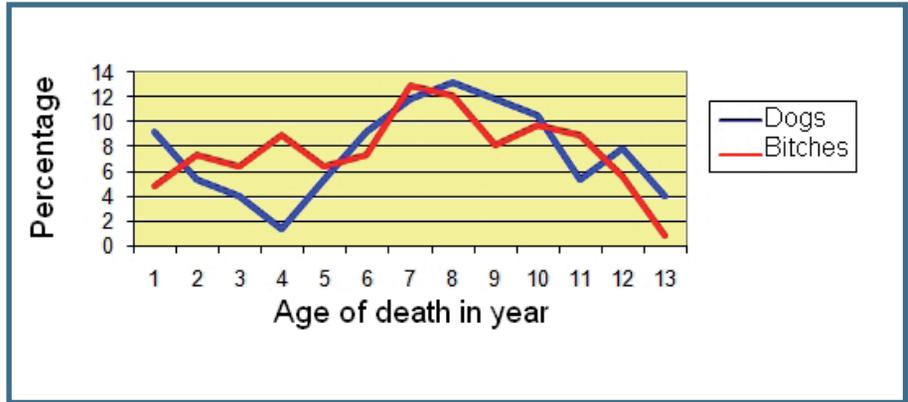
Average life expectancy for a bitch at birth: 6.8 years

By isolating the number of bitches dying during or after pregnancy, the life expectancy of the remaining bitches at birth is 7.1 years.

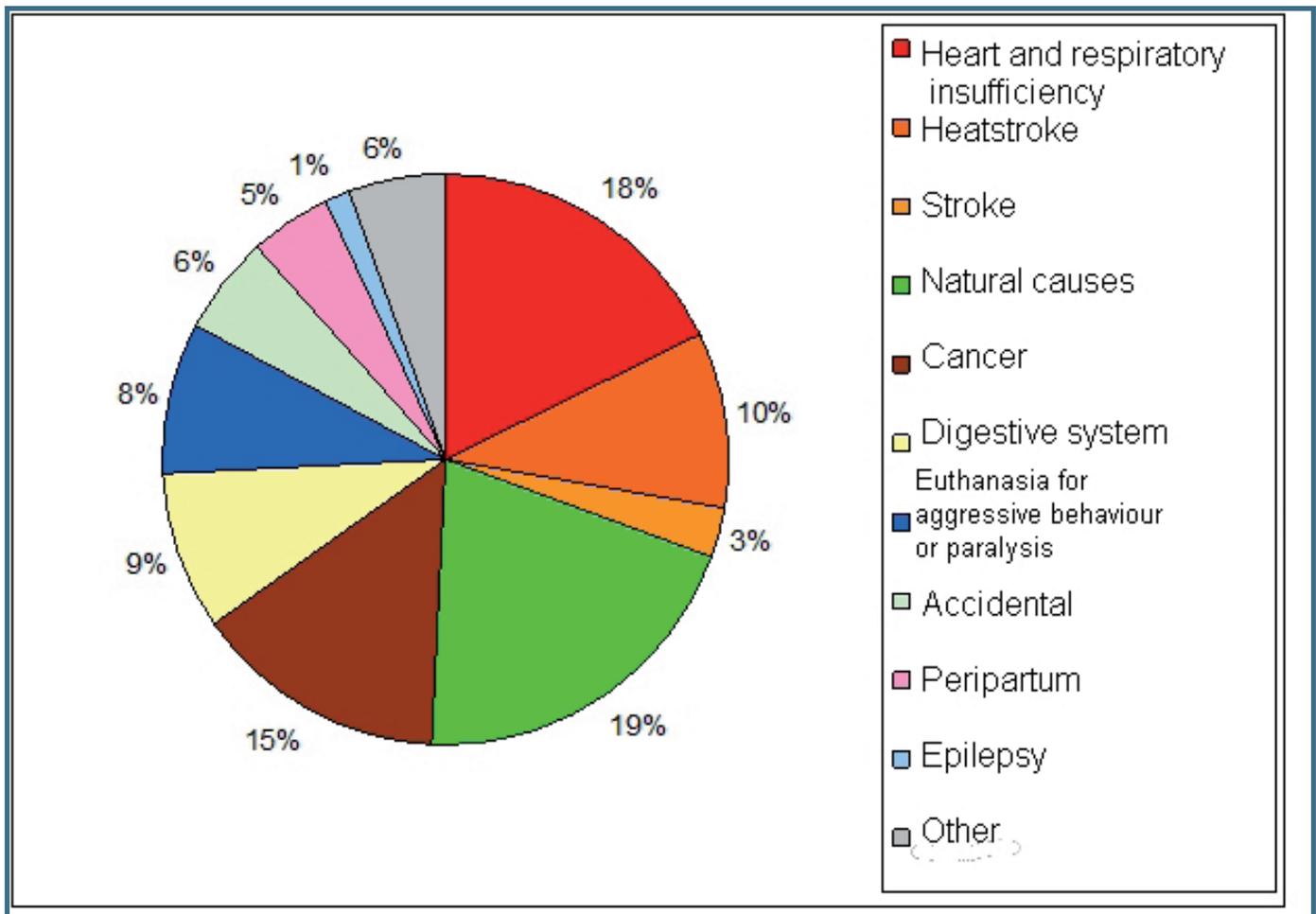
However, outside of the unfortunate pregnancies, the puppies are delivered, in most cases, 94% by caesarean section which does not have an impact on life expectancy. So, if we compare comparable bitches, that is to say bitches that have all lived at least to 7 years old and have had the time to whelp at least 4 litters (there are no bitches within the study that have whelped 5 litters or more), we obtain average life expectancy, which doesn't decrease significantly with the higher number of litters, as follows :

- Bitches having no litter: 8.7 years
- Bitches with 1 litter: 9.6 years
- Bitches with 2 litters: 8.4 years
- Bitches with 3 litters: 9.4 years
- Bitches with 4 litters: 10.5 years

longevity curves compared  
males / females



## 9 - CAUSE OF DEATH



COMPARISON BETWEEN DOGS OF ALL BREEDS

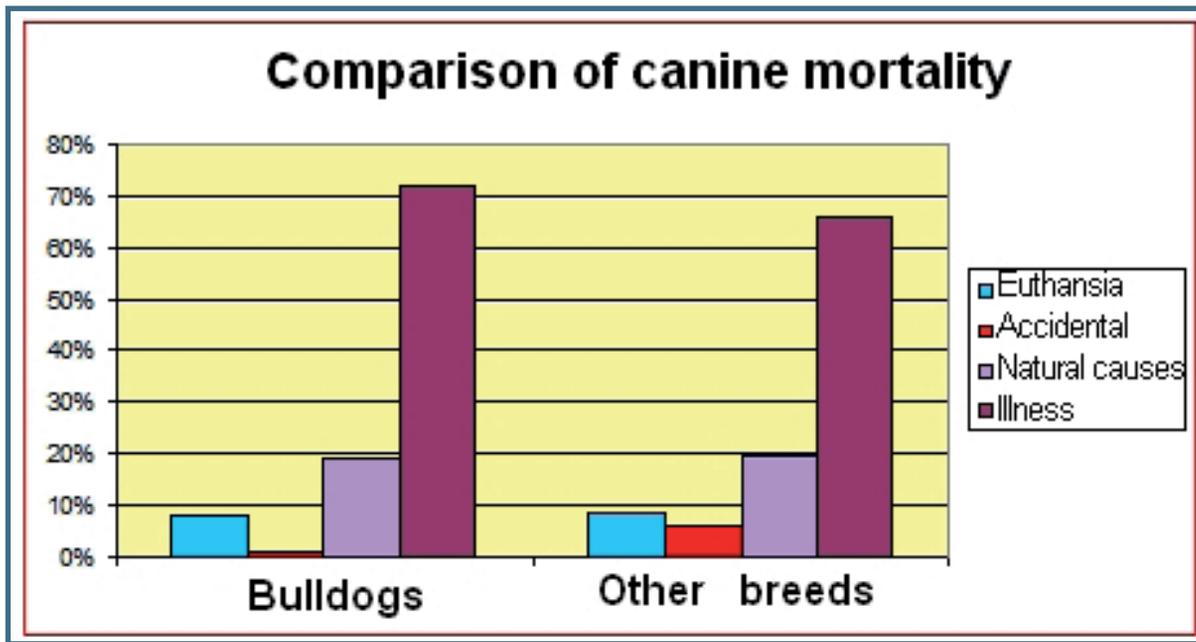
Bibliography: Comparative study of causes of death and life expectancy in carnivores pets.

D Moreau; P Cathelain; A Lacherez. Envl 2003

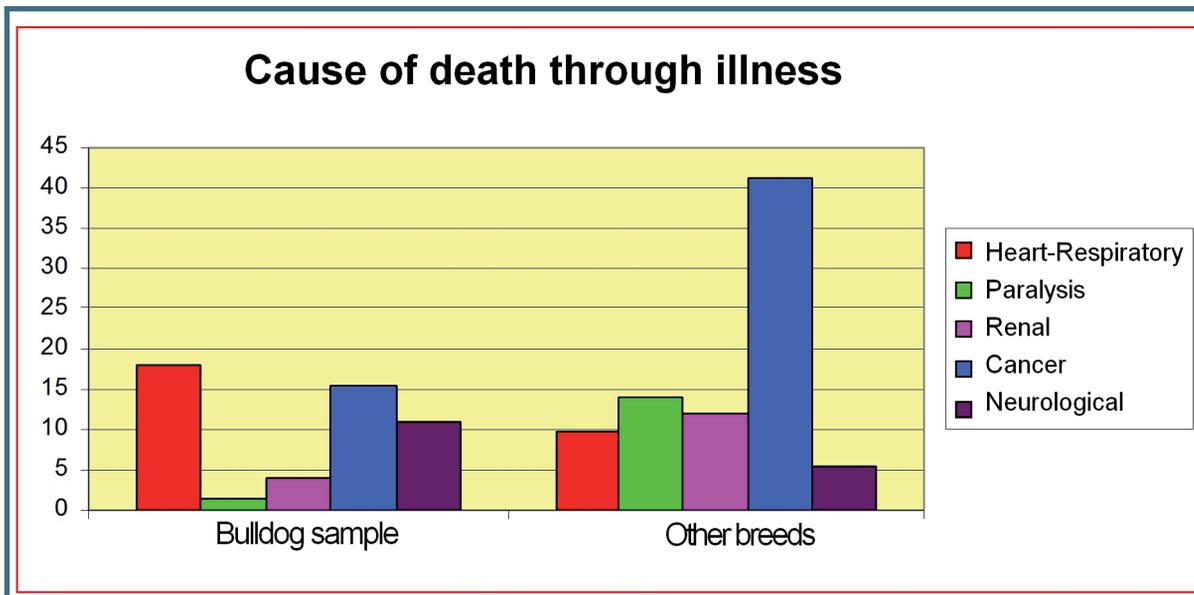
**Average Life Expectancy all breeds: 11.5 years**



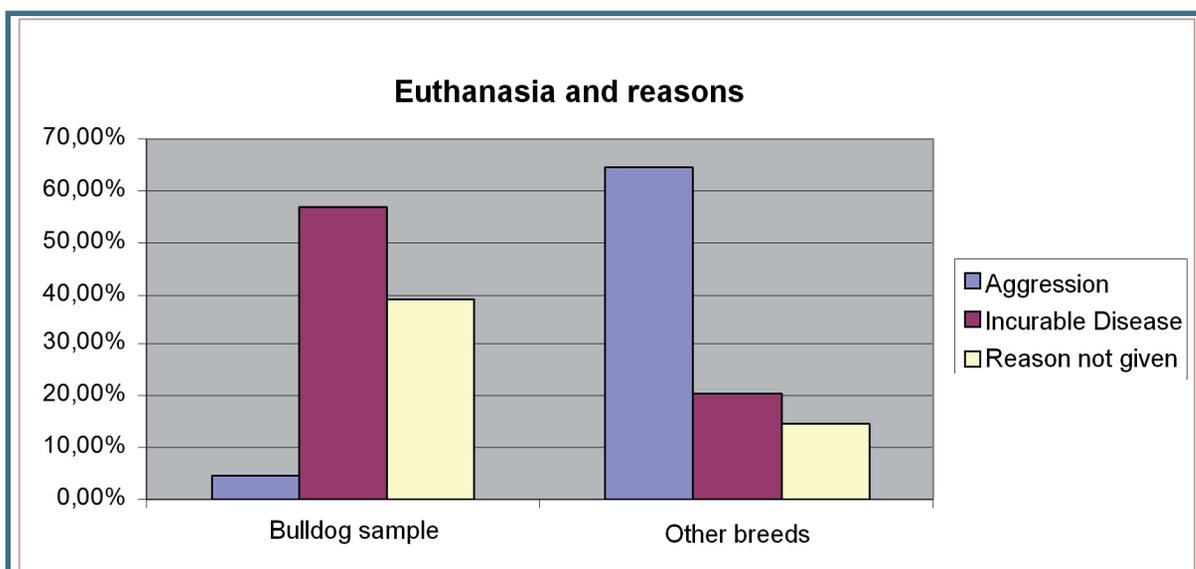
Cause of Death:



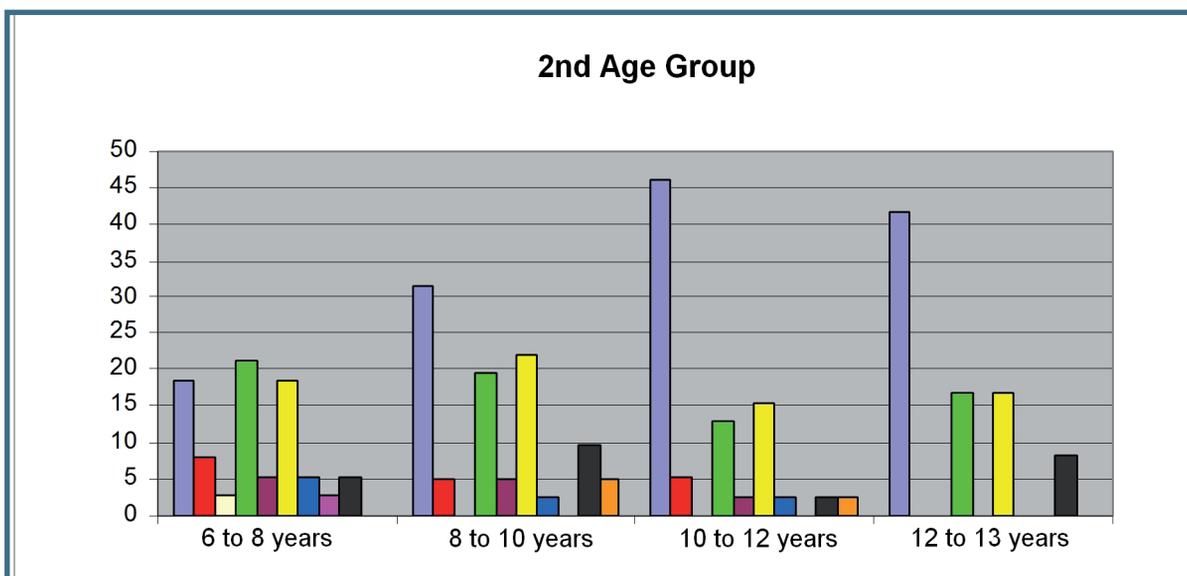
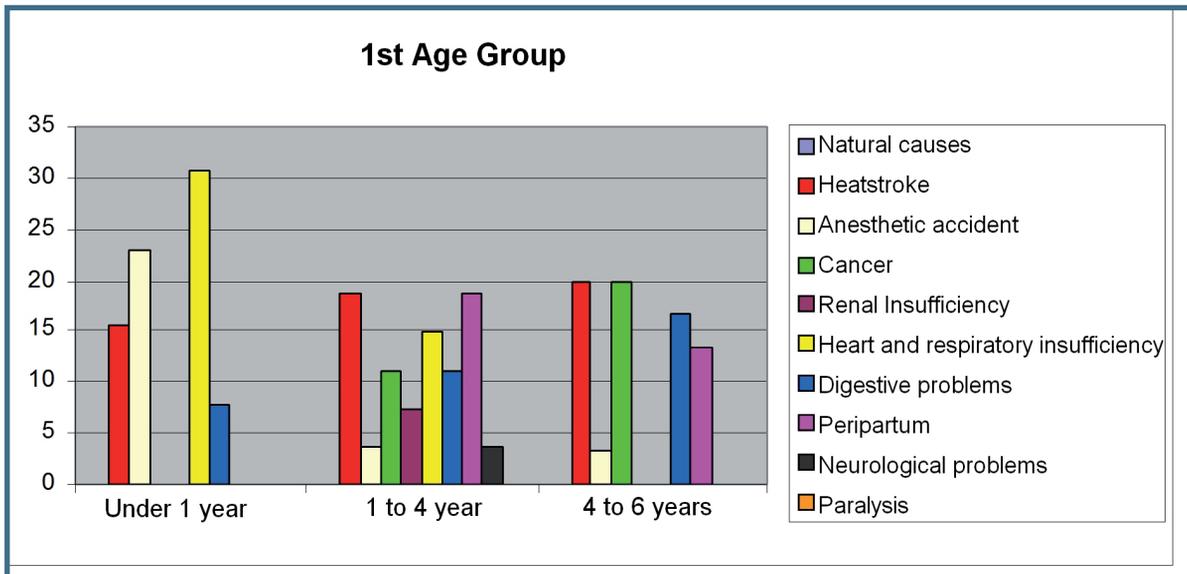
Cause of death through Illness :



Euthanasia and reasons :



## 10 - CAUSE OF DEATH BY AGE



- **Death by natural causes:** normal evolution depending on their age. We remark that the majority of deaths, classed by the owners as normal, occurred between the ages of 10 and 12 years.
- **Pathology concerning very young dogs** (less than 1 year): A very high number of heart-respiratory pathologies and accidents during anesthetic. The death of the very young bulldog is associated almost exclusively with brachycephalic syndromes such as hyperplasia of the soft palate, stenotic nares and over exaggerated features.
- The **cases of heatstroke**, often really pulmonary edema, in relation to brachycephalic syndrome and the influence of stress and/or climatic conditions, occur mainly before the age of 6 years.
- **Peripartum** is logically responsible for deaths in bitches between the ages of 1 and 6 years, the period when they are reproductively active. It is responsible for deaths almost to the same degree as heatstroke and cancer.

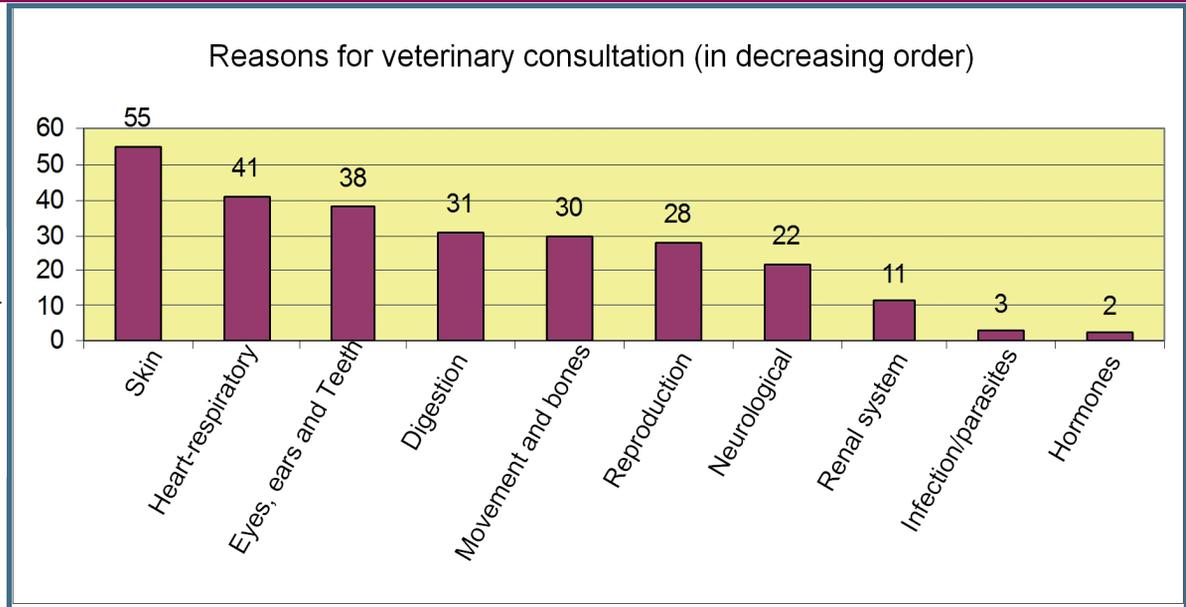
## 11 - MEDICAL MONITORING

On average 3 veterinary visits per annum, including vaccinations..



## 12 - VETERINARY CONSULTATION MOTIFS

Illnesses during the dog's life (and the number of study dogs concerned)



It is interesting to notice the prominence of skin problems associated with the Bulldog,  
 44% of various allergies;  
 22% fur loss due to hormonal or seasonal changes;  
 13% Demodicosis;  
 11% inverted tails;  
 10% interdigital cysts.

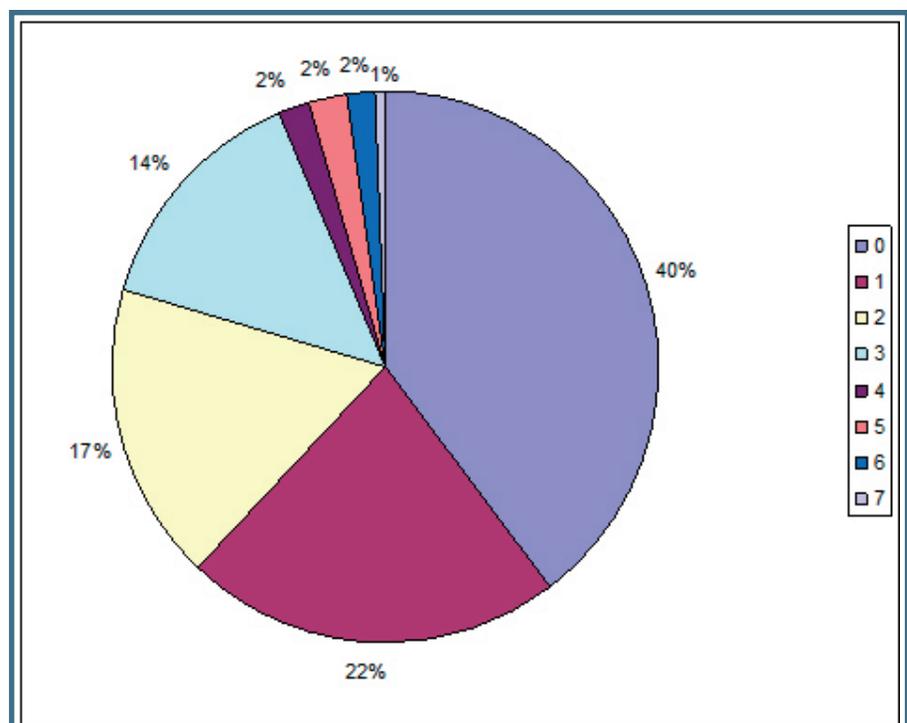
Following, without surprise, cardiorespiratory infections  
 30% hyperplasia of the soft palate;  
 14% heart failure;  
 24% acute pulmonary oedema;  
 12% stenotic nares;

6% congenital heart disease.  
 Also problems concerning teeth, eyes and ears:  
 40% entropion/ectropion;  
 15% dry eye;  
 15% ulceration of the cornea;  
 23% severe ear inflammation;  
 7% dental infections.

Hormonal infections are rarely mentioned (3 cases out of 200 dogs):  
 2 thyroid,  
 1 Cushing's  
 and no diabetes !

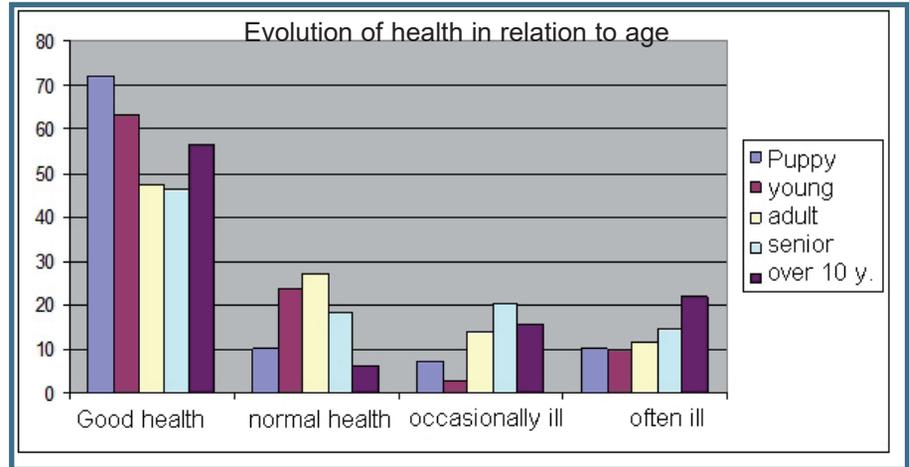
## 13 - ANAESTHETICS

Breakdown of number of anaesthetics in a dog's lifetime



## 14 - STATE OF HEALTH

Appraisal of the bulldogs' state of health by the owner



## 15 - BEHAVIOUR

### With people :

Friendly - 91%  
unfriendly - 3%  
aggressive - 0%  
indifferent - 6%

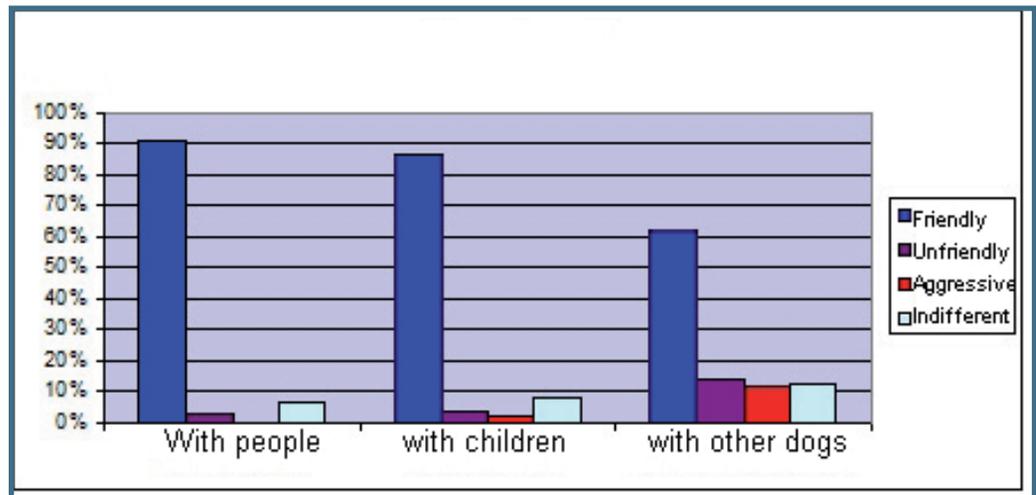
### With children :

Friendly - 86,5%  
unfriendly - 3,5%  
aggressive - 2%  
indifferent - 8%

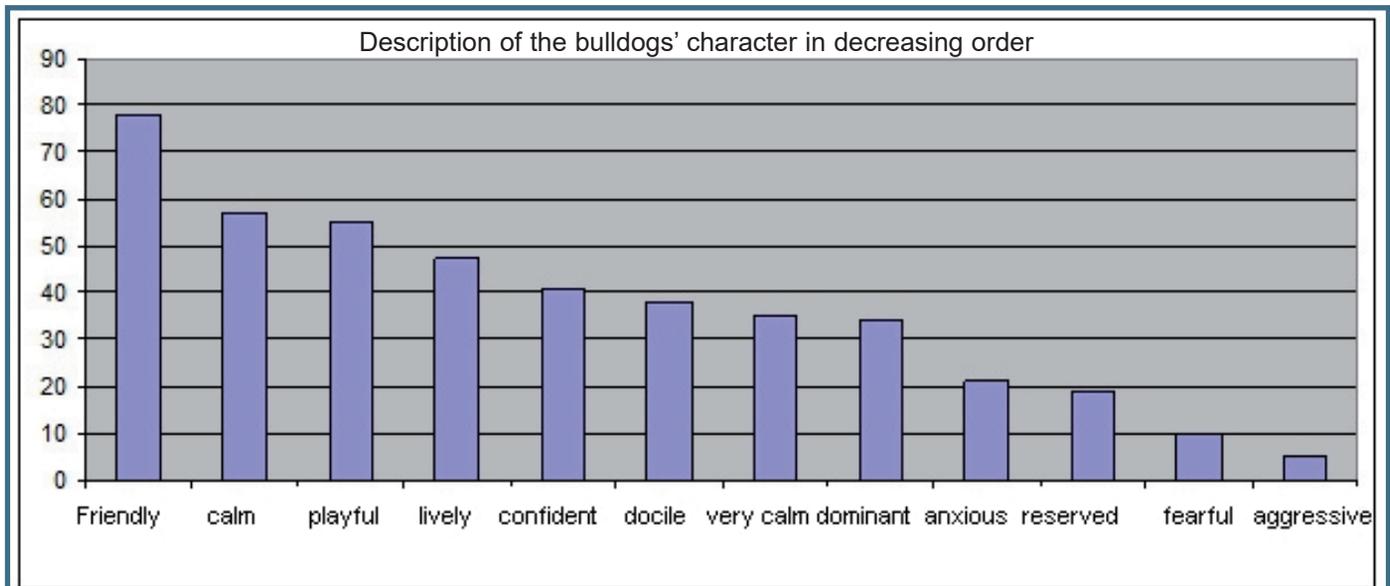
### With other dogs :

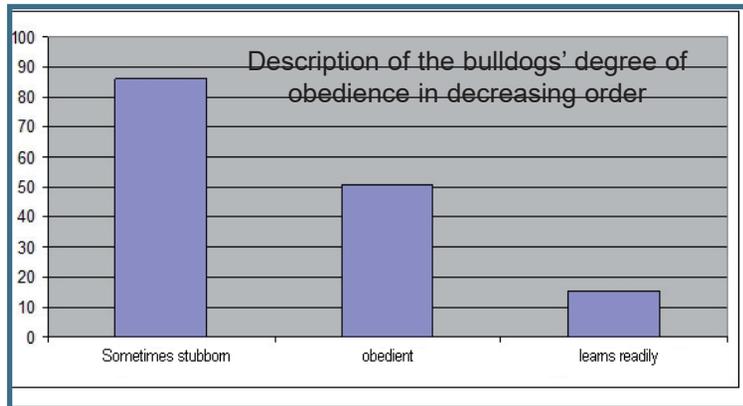
Friendly - 62,5%  
unfriendly - 14%  
aggressive - 11,5%  
indifferent - 12%-

Caution, unfriendliness or aggression are hardly mentioned (less than 14%) and occur essentially towards other dogs. We notice that only 2% of aggression towards children.

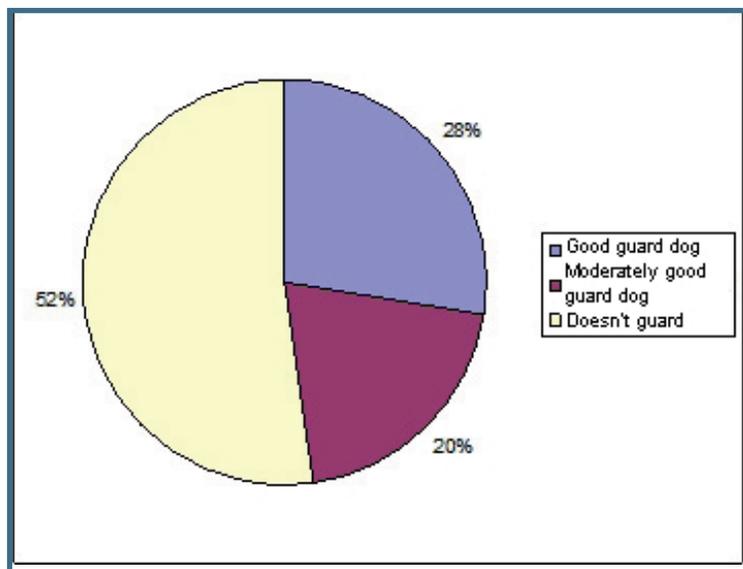


Description of the bulldogs' character in decreasing order



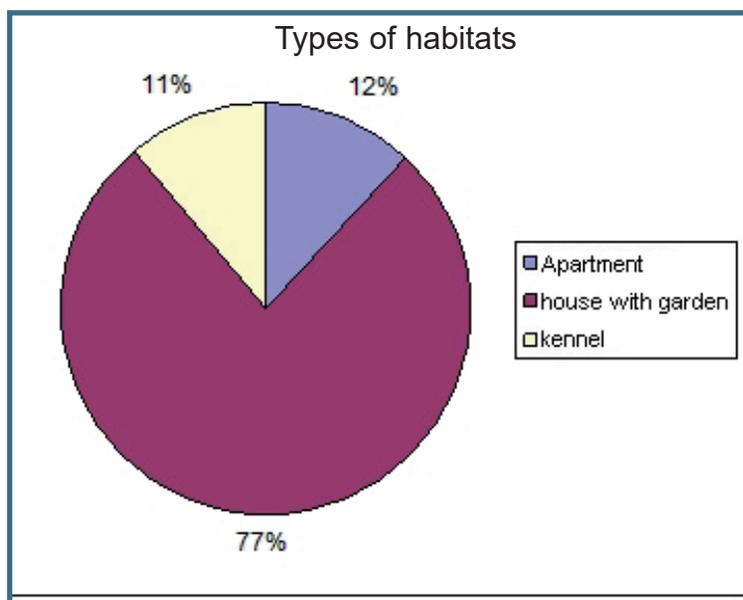


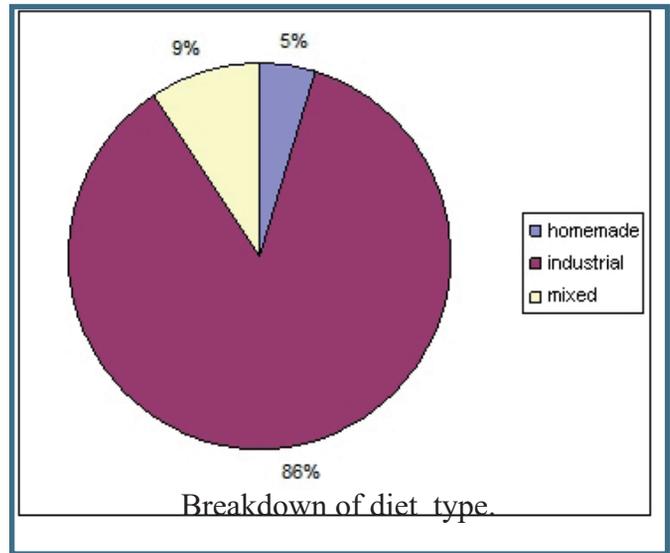
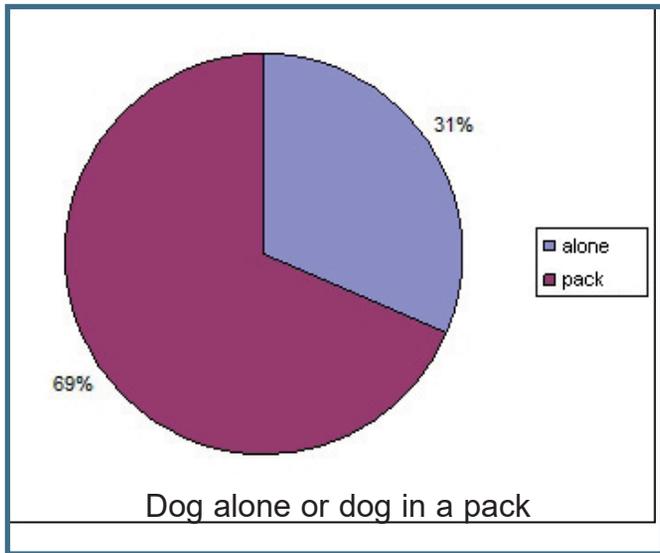
Ability to guard :



A bulldog that is quiet and calm, do they live longer than others ? No, neither more nor less.

## 16 - LIVING ENVIRONMENT





## CONCLUSION

The aim of this Lifespan study of the Bulldog, after taking into account these first findings, is to awaken responsibility in lovers of our breed whether judges, breeders, individual pet owners or veterinary surgeons.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the bulldog and its breeding selection?

How to extend the average life expectancy from 6.9 years to an ideal of 10 to 11 years?

How to avoid the 'high mortality' in young age very likely associated with over exaggerated features?

How to better manage the death rate resulting from pregnancy?

All future discussions surely animated and passionate will, we hope, be friendly, polite and include all concerned with the breed.

**The Challenge :**

**Live as long as possible with the bulldog that we love by our sides.**