A future for felines with FIP: Key takeaways

1. Feline infectious peritonitis is a **mutation of the feline enteric coronavirus**, a gastrointestinal bug that's prevalent in 30% to 90% of cats worldwide. In an **estimated 1%-10% of cats, the virus mutates to become FIP,** which spreads through the body, attacking organs and causing overwhelming inflammation.

2. There are **two types of FIP.** In the effusive, or "wet," form, fluid accumulates in the cat's chest and abdomen. The noneffusive, or "dry," form affects cats' nervous systems.

3. **Early symptoms** in both types are loss of appetite, weight loss, lethargy and fever. Currently, there's **no conclusive test for FIP** and **no effective vaccine** to protect against it.

4. Until recently, there was no cure for FIP, and the disease was invariably fatal. Then in 2017, researchers discovered that an **antiviral drug called GS-441524 cured more than 80% of cats with FIP.**

5. Because **GS-441524 wasn't available legally in the U.S.** and several other countries, desperate cat parents began purchasing black-market liquid GS-441524 from China.

6. In 2020, remdesivir, a near twin of GS-441524 and equally effective in treating FIP, was approved for off-label use in animals in the U.S. However, **remdesivir remains hard to obtain and prohibitively expensive.**

7. In spring 2024, the **U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced that it wouldn't pursue enforcement action on the use of compounded GS-441524 for animals.** In June 2024, a pharmacy in New Jersey began selling the **compounded drug in a tuna-flavored tablet.**

8. **U.S. veterinarians can now prescribe** the compounded GS-441524 tablet. Feline advocates hope that compounding pharmacies will soon offer a liquid injectable for cats who are too sick to take oral medications.

9. The **costs for GS-441524 have decreased substantially** since 2017, making FIP treatment accessible to more cat owners.

10. Researchers are currently studying **other drug treatments** for FIP and the possibility of an **FIP vaccine.**

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