

Exposing the Myths of FIV and Feline AIDS

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May 7, 2025

Recently, Miles published a paper titled [*I Feel So Sorry For Most Pets*](#), describing how many cats are prevented from living their lives fully. Given that we also own cats that are not neutered, vaccinated, confined or fed commercial food, I can only agree with him. Our cats are amazing, and we are beyond grateful that they turned up at our place (it all started with a feral cat bringing us kittens, one of which is shown above). Even our intact males are unproblematic, making us wonder why everyone around us is castrating males in the name of preventing them from roaming and fighting.

In this paper, I would like to add to Miles' thesis by exposing fake diseases and inaccurate testing as additional factors that contribute to the suffering of cats. Supposedly afflicted with contagious diseases, cats testing positive on various tests are being confined, isolated, or even killed. We all know about countless birds being killed due to allegedly being infected with bird flu, but countless cats have also been killed for testing positive for feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV). In this paper, I will show why the killing of FIV-positive cats is pointless – and indeed, it has become much less common in recent years, as many have realized that the disease is not what it was made out to be. But these improvements are not enough. To this day, cats are isolated if they test positive on an FIV test, and people are advised to neuter to “reduce chances of catching FIV”. Therefore, I find it important that all the myths surrounding FIV (and the associated “disease” called feline AIDS) are dismantled. As I will show below, it turns out there is absolutely no difference between FIV-positive and FIV-negative cats, and that “feline AIDS” is not contagious. Neutering also has no effect on FIV or its contagion. The case of FIV is a perfect example showing how misleading medical (and by extension, veterinary) science can be.

Let's briefly look into the history of the FIV virus. FIV was identified in 1986. Studies appeared that supposedly demonstrated pathogenicity, contagiousness, and an association of the virus with various disease states,⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽³⁾⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾ and panic began. Feline AIDS was presented to the public as a highly contagious disease which, similar to human AIDS, affects the immune system and can cause so-called secondary infections, and often even death of the cat several years after infection. Some veterinary websites, such as the one from which the text below was copied, are still instilling fear to this day:

Feline AIDS is a highly contagious disease of cats and is widespread throughout the world. It is dangerous for all cats, regardless of their age. The cause of the disease is the FIV virus. The virus is spread through saliva and blood. The disease is most widespread among adult cats, as they are very aggressive during mating and their behavior leads to rough fights with other cats. An infected cat can transmit the virus to a healthy animal by biting. Embryos can also become infected through the placenta in the womb or immediately after birth, when an infected cat licks and caresses them.

The virus first settles in the lymph nodes and spleen, where it attacks white blood cells. White blood cells are very important, as they are responsible for the body's resistance. By destroying white blood cells, the virus weakens the cat's defense system. A cat thus infected may appear healthy for several years, but becomes more susceptible to infections that are harmless to healthy animals, but can be fatal to an infected animal. 80% of animals survive 4 to 5 years after infection. However, 50% of infected cats never develop the disease and are only carriers of the disease.⁽⁶⁾

Let's now look at the reality, which is completely different. Study after study⁽⁷⁾⁽⁸⁾⁽⁹⁾⁽¹⁰⁾⁽¹¹⁾ has shown that FIV-positive cats around the world live just as long as FIV-negative cats. So, **not only can they live – these cats do live just as long**. Think about it: if FIV caused any significant disease, if even a fraction of animals with FIV actually died prematurely, wouldn't that affect the average lifespan of those animals?

People who have long-term experience with FIV-positive cats (e.g., shelters for FIV-positive cats) have also noticed that "infected" cats do not appear any sicker than FIV-negative cats. After observing the health status of FIV-positive cats in their care for many years, one of the shelters concluded:

The experience of our 80 or so FIV cats over the last fifteen years have shown that they are no different, with regard to health issues, than any group of cats without the virus.

One might wonder where the reported problems came from that form the information given out by 'authorities'.

As already indicated, we suspect it is a product of vets across the country who see the FIV cats who are brought in as ill cats, rather than from a truly representative selection of FIV cats, ie mostly well FIV cats.⁽¹²⁾

The people running this particular shelter were so moved by the killing of FIV-positive cats that they started a project called [1000 FIV Cats](#). Currently, over 1,000 cats from all over the world are included in the project, and analysis of the data has once again shown that “infected” cats suffer from exactly the same symptoms and diseases as “uninfected” cats. In other words, **as far as health is concerned, FIV-positive cats do not differ from FIV-negative cats, nor do they have decreased immunity** (which is only logical, considering that both groups live just as long).⁽¹³⁾

But the story doesn't end there. What this disease is also feared for is its contagiousness. If a disease is not contagious, isolation and euthanasia of cats are especially pointless. However, people who work and live with FIV-positive cats have observed that the disease is not transmitted to uninfected cats, even after many years of close contact with FIV-positive cats.⁽¹⁴⁾⁽¹⁵⁾ Over the years, there have been so many of these observations that Annette Litster, a veterinarian, decided to conduct a scientific study to answer the question of transmission once and for all. She followed two groups of FIV-positive cats from two rescue shelters. In the first shelter, 138 cats lived together, 8 of which tested positive for FIV. **During the study, which lasted more than two years, none of the FIV-negative cats became FIV-positive, confirming the hypothesis that the virus is not transmitted between animals under normal conditions.** Five FIV-positive cats, which were pregnant at the time of the study and had a total of 19 kittens, were monitored at another shelter. All 19 kittens tested negative for FIV, **indicating that the virus is not transmitted from mother to kitten.**⁽¹⁶⁾⁽¹⁷⁾

The group leading the *1000 FIV Cats* project also obtained similar results. **Among the hundreds of FIV-positive cats that have lived with FIV-negative cats, not a single case of transmission to an uninfected cat has been recorded over the years.**⁽¹⁴⁾ Potential transmission via bites is mentioned, but it would be wise to question this as well. Above all, once we know that FIV is harmless, the question of transmission becomes completely irrelevant.

How could science get its original findings so very wrong? I certainly wouldn't exclude corruption as a possible cause, but another factor is that experiments in laboratory studies are often conducted under very unnatural conditions. Most people don't realize just how different laboratory conditions can be from what happens in nature. A good example of this is feline infectious peritonitis (FIP), which is linked to feline coronavirus. Diane Addie studied the disease outside of the laboratory, and her results were completely different from those of previous laboratory studies. By doing so, she overturned the paradigm in the field, calling into question 40 years of scientific understanding. **When asked in an interview if the use of deliberately infected laboratory cats had been counter productive and led scientists down the wrong path, she replied: “Absolutely!”**⁽¹⁸⁾

In the case of FIV, none of the studies seem convincing to begin with, so perhaps it was mostly marketing and media hype. One can only imagine how solid the science surrounding human AIDS is, given that much of the insight into HIV is said to have been gained by studying its “animal equivalent”, FIV.⁽¹⁹⁾

It is important to note at this point that tests for infectious diseases can be highly unreliable, and this is especially true for tests for feline leukemia virus (FeLV). One source states that for every 1,000 cats tested for FeLV (in a population where 3% of cats are infected), 17 of the 47 cats that test positive for the virus are actually not infected. This means that 36% of positive results are false positives.⁽²⁰⁾ Another source reveals even more shocking data. A study of the VetScan Rapid test

showed it to be so non-specific that out of 17 cats that tested positive for FeLV, only 3 may actually be infected. In other words, **over 82% of cats that test positive for FeLV may be false positives.**⁽²¹⁾

People who work with FIV-positive cats describe testing kittens for FIV as “a complete waste of time and money”.⁽²²⁾ If antibodies are passed from a FIV-positive mother to her kittens, they will continue to test positive for some months, but this doesn't mean they are ill in any way.

Due to the unreliability of the tests and the finding that widespread testing does more harm than good, US veterinarians have now begun recommending that shelters stop routinely testing cats for FIV and FeLV.⁽²⁰⁾ This can only be commented on with one word – finally!

To sum up, it is high time the feline AIDS scare ends once and for all. It is time to stop confining or even killing animals because of an insignificant test result. It is truly ironic that these actions are being taken in the name of preventing suffering and death.

In conclusion, I would like to mention another interesting finding from the group leading the 1000 FIV Cats project. They have always allowed their FIV-positive cats to roam outside and noticed that the health of these cats is better than that of FIV-positive cats kept in confinement. They wonder if access to the outdoors is crucial for keeping cats healthy.⁽²³⁾ There is no doubt in my mind that animals (including people) who do not get enough fresh air, light and exercise are in worse health than those who do. For cats, confinement can be very stressful, and stress is one of the main factors in the development of all kinds of diseases. Many studies have shown a low prevalence of FIV and FeLV in feral, mostly intact cats.⁽²⁴⁾⁽²⁵⁾⁽²⁶⁾ Therefore, the theory that one can prevent associated diseases (or non-diseases) by isolating, neutering, vaccinating, etc., once again crumbles under the weight of the evidence.

Miles here: Reading this reminded me to remind you not to test your cats for this or anything else, since that is just asking for trouble. As we see, vets run these tests specifically in order to find something, so it is a guarantee they will. They will then require expensive treatments, quarantining, or murdering your pet in the name of public health. And of course the same applies to other animals, **as well as to your children and yourself.** You don't need screening, check-ups, or most other scheduled maintenance, physical or psychological. [This includes dental x-rays and retinal scans, both of which I have been refusing for decades. In the case of glaucoma, the old air-puff tests were all you needed, but they don't require the expensive machines, so they can't charge you as much for that.] In fact, you now have to go out of your way to protect your children from invasive procedures at school, as we found out during Covid.

I have a story from my life for you, to drive this idea deep into your head. When I lived in Taos I had an older friend who I met at one of the coffee shops. I was about 50 and he was early 60s. He was a retired artist who had no health insurance and very little money, living mostly off Social Security, so when he got a hernia he didn't know what to do. I am not sure why Medicare didn't cover this, but he was too proud to claim indigent health care, suffering with it for months. It was gruesome. Finally I convinced him it was a simple out-patient procedure, done in a few minutes, and that it wouldn't cost the hospital or taxpayers much anyway. It wasn't like open-heart surgery. So he went in. I thought it was done, but when I saw him next I could see he was still in pain. I asked what had happened. He told me that they had drilled a hole in his leg to check for bone cancer. I

said, "What!? Did you tell them you thought you might have cancer?" He said no, but they had played on his fear, making him think he might have bone cancer. They then told him he *did* have bone cancer, and that he needed to agree to treatment for that before they would fix his hernia. I am not making this up. The only thing I can figure is that he looked sort of like a bum, so they assumed they could take him for a ride. They probably had some program that offered big federal funds for some experimental bone cancer treatment, but of course no program for hernias. So they tried to trick him like this.

I told him this sounded like a scam and I offered to drive him to Santa Fe for a second opinion. I told him he probably didn't have bone cancer and that they were lying to him. I also wanted to take this to the newspaper, and maybe to other authorities, but he begged me not to. He didn't want to get involved in that. Instead, he was thinking about going down to Mexico for alternative treatment. He just wouldn't listen to me. Within a few months he was dead of that hernia and that fear of having bone cancer.

Two lessons there, as I see it: 1) never consent to exploratory procedures, except in very extreme and specific cases. Doctors will always find something, and it will usually be the most expensive thing. 2) Even if you go into a hospital for something straightforward like a hernia or a broken arm, be on high alert for hijinx like this. The world is now full of scams, and they aren't all in your inbox or on your phone.

As for your pets, be just as protective of them as you would be of your child. Never leave them alone with a vet, since pets cannot consent and won't be asked to. Vets have been known to vaccinate or fix without consent, which is not hard to believe anymore considering that the government and schools are now vaccinating kids without consent. Avoid vets if you can, but if you have to deal with one, be sure you know what is happening at all times and don't be afraid to ask questions. If anything shady starts to go down, grab your pet and hoof it. Literally run out the door as fast as your little legs will take you, and don't look back.

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