

SKIN

The GSD has a very impressive list of skin conditions that can affect it as a breed.

Collagen Disorders of the Footpads - Thought to be inherited, it is an ulcerative disorder of the pads, which generally regresses spontaneously by 12 months of age. However, affected animals usually die of renal amyloidosis later in life. [This condition has to my knowledge never been reported in Australia].

Deep Staph Pyoderma (Furunculosis/Folliculitis/Cellulitis) - Seen almost exclusively in middle aged GSD's, usually over 5-6 years of age, with probably a slightly higher incidence being seen in females. Most cases have a pattern of frequent relapses and the condition is thought to have an immunological basis. Severely affected dogs, if not treated adequately, should be euthanised.

Acanthosis Nigricans - Often this condition is associated with a hypothyroidism. It is considered to be secondary to endocrinopathies (including hypothyroidism, sex hormone "imbalances" etc) and hypersensitivities (chronic reactions, atrophies, etc; ie. arising from auto-immune deficiencies or hyper-sensitivities). These dogs again would have to be considered as having an immune system problem. These dogs are not that uncommon and most surgeries that seen reasonable numbers of GSD's would have around 10 cases ongoing at any one time.

Dyscoid Lupus Erythematosis - Cutaneous (of the skin), this is an immune system problem, where the exposed skin is over sensitive, particularly to the summer sun. This condition is largely controllable. Excessive exposure to summer sun should be avoided. This is an immune system problem. Numbers seen are very small proportionally.

Nasal Keratitis - Refer to **Dyscoid Lupus Erythematosis** above.

Pemphigus - Again an immune system problem of the skin.

Hypothyroid - Not a high incidence within the GSD breed, but as with all chronic conditions affecting large areas of the body or involving several body systems, eg. acanthosis, then it should be considered as a possible underlying factor. Equally true (chicken and the egg problem), is that the thyroid levels can be lower in any chronic debilitating condition. Rarely seen under 2-3 years in the GSD. Can be associated with Acanthosis Nigricans.