

Difficulty giving birth in dogs

Clinical outcomes

This study evaluated the clinical management and outcomes of dystocia (difficulty giving birth) in bitches in the UK.

From these dystocia cases, **25%** of puppies and **1.7%** bitches died.

The average litter size of bitches with dystocia was **4** puppies but, on average, only **3** puppies survived.

48.6% of problem births resulted in caesarean surgery.

Bulldogs with dystocia were **7.6** times more likely to have caesarean surgery than crossbreed bitches.

Oxytocin was administered to **54.2%** and calcium gluconate to **11.7%** of dystocic bitches.

Flat-faced (brachycephalic) breeds with dystocia were **1.5** times more likely to receive caesarean surgery compared with non-brachycephalic breeds.

CONCLUSION

Giving birth carries serious health and welfare risks for both bitches and their puppies. Seek advice from your veterinary surgeon before planning to breed from your bitch, especially for breeds with a high risk of dystocia.

This study included 701 dystocia cases from 18,758 entire bitches attending 50 Vets Now emergency veterinary clinics in the UK. O'Neill, D.G. et al. (2019) "Canine dystocia in 50 UK first-opinion emergency-care veterinary practices: Clinical management and outcomes" Veterinary Record (Freely available)