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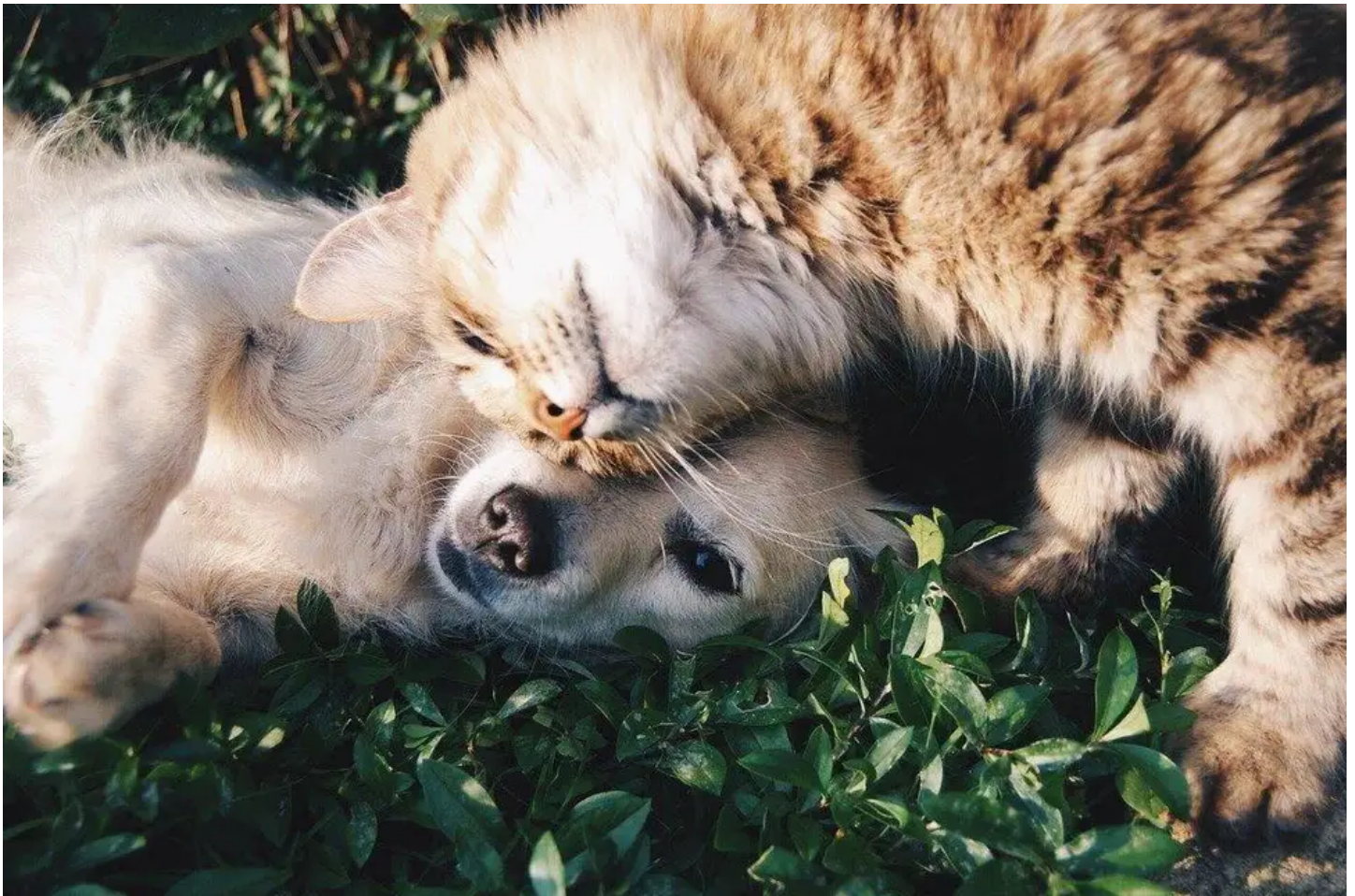
'Increasing evidence' shows animals can catch coronavirus from humans and could pass it on, say scientists

'Virus transmission in animal populations could become irreversible if left unchecked'

HARRIET BREWIS | 3 hours ago | [3 comments](#)

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Researchers at UCL say there is 'increasing evidence' animals can catch coronavirus and pass it on to humans ([Pixabay](#))

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Scientists are calling for more research into how **coronavirus affects animals amid fears they could re-infect human populations who have fought to control the disease.**

If **Covid-19** becomes common in animals living in close proximity to humans, such as pets or livestock, outbreaks could reemerge even in areas where the virus has been eliminated among people, researchers at **University College London** (UCL) warn.

In a comment article in The Lancet Microbe, the team has called for further investigations into which animals are susceptible to the virus which causes



They then want to see regular testing carried out on the species which pose the highest risk of transmitting the disease to people.

Confirmed cases of the virus have been seen among **domestic and feral cats**, dogs, hamsters, monkeys and ferrets.

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The authors also warn farmed wildlife such as pigs, minks, bats and rodents, could act as “reservoir species” for the virus.

Some 10,000 farmed minks were killed in the Netherlands last month due to fears they had spread the disease to people, although only a small number of the animals showed symptoms.



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Co-author Professor Joanne Santini said: “There is increasing evidence that some animals can catch SARS-CoV-2 from people, and might subsequently transmit it to other people – but we don’t know just how much of a risk this is, as it’s an area of study that has not yet been prioritised.

“We need to develop surveillance strategies to ensure we don’t get taken by surprise by a large outbreak in animals, which could pose a threat not just to animal health but to human health as well.

“Virus transmission in animal populations could become irreversible if left unchecked, and may threaten the success of existing public health measures if people continue to catch the virus from an infected population of animals.”

