A novel feline norovirus in diarrhoeic cats

Barbara Di Martino^a, Federica Di Profio^a, Irene Melegari^a, Vittorio Sarchese^a, Maria Assunta Cafiero^b, Serena Robetto^c, Giovanni Aste^a, Gianvito Lanave^d, Fulvio Marsilio^a, Vito Martella^d

Affiliations

^aFaculty of Veterinary Medicine, Università degli Studi di Teramo, Italy
^bExperimental Zooprophylactic Institute of Puglia and Basilicata, Foggia, Italy
^cExperimental Zooprophylactic Institute of Piemonte, Liguria e Valle d'Aosta, Centro di Referenza
Nazionale per le Malattie degli Animali Selvatici (CeRMAS) – Italy
^dFaculty of Veterinary Medicine, Università Aldo Moro di Bari, Valenzano, Italy

Corresponding author

Barbara Di Martino, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Università degli Studi di Teramo, Italy, phone: +39-0861266845, email: bdimartino@unite.it

Abstract

By screening a collection of faecal samples from young cats housed in three different shelters in South Italy, noroviruses (NoVs) were found in 3/48 (6.2 %) specimens of animals with enteritis signs while they were not detected in samples collected from healthy cats (0/57). Upon sequence analysis of the short RNA-dependent RNA polymerase (RdRp) region, the three strains displayed the highest nucleotide (nt) and amino acid (aa) identities to the prototype GIV.2 strain lion/Pistoia/387/06/ITA (91.0-93.0% nt and 97.0-98.0% aa). The sequence of ~3.4-kb portion at the 3' end of the genome of a NoV strain, TE/77-13/ITA, was determined. In the full-length ORF2, encoding the VP1 capsid protein, the virus was genetically closest to the canine GVI.2 NoV strains C33/Viseu/2007/PRT and FD53/2007/ITA (81.0-84.0% nt and 93.0-94.0% aa identities), suggesting a recombination nature, with the cross-over site being mapped to the ORF1-ORF2 junction. Based on the full-length VP1 amino acid sequence, we classified the novel feline NoV, together with the canine strains Viseu and FD53, as a genotype 2, within the genogroup GVI. These findings indicate that, as observed for GIV NoV, GVI strains may infect both the canine and feline host. Unrestricted circulation of NoV strains in small carnivores may provide the basis for quick genetic diversification of these viruses by recombination. Interspecies circulation of NoVs in pets must also be considered when facing outbreaks of enteric diseases in these animals.

Keywords: norovirus, cats, enteritis, genogroup VI, genotype 2

1. Introduction

Noroviruses (NoVs), *Caliciviridae* family, have been identified as the most common cause of viral gastroenteritis in humans. NoV infections affect persons of all age groups and are predominantly transmitted through the faecal–oral route, either indirectly through contaminated food, water or surfaces or directly from person to person (Patel et al., 2008).

Drop virions are nonenveloped and approximately 30 to 35 nm in diameter. The RNA genome is organized into three open reading frames (ORFs) (Green et al., 2007). ORF1 encodes a polyprotein that is cleaved by the virus-encoded protease to produce several nonstructural proteins, including the RNA dependent RNA polymerase (RdRp), ORF2 encodes a major capsid protein (VP1) and ORF3 encodes a small basic protein (VP2) that has been associated with the capsid stability (Bertolotti-Ciarlet et al., 2003).

Based on the full-length VP1 amino acid sequence, NoVs have been divided into six genogroups (GI to GVI) and several genotypes (Zheng et al., 2006; Martella et al., 2009; Green, 2013). Only GI, GII, and GIV NoVs infect humans, with GII strains being the most prevalent worldwide (Green, 2007). NoVs genetically similar to human NoVs have been recently found in dogs and cats (Martella et al., 2007; Martella et al., 2008; Summa et al., 2012; Pinto et al., 2012; Soma et al., 2014), raising public health concerns of potential cross-species transmission due to the strict social interaction between humans and pets.

Feline NoVs were first detected in the stools of 8–12-week-old kittens from a feline shelter with an outbreak of diarrhea in New York State (Pinto et al., 2012). In the VP1 encoding gene, the feline NoVs displayed the highest amino acid (aa) identity (97.9%) to the prototype NoV strain GIV.2/Pistoia/387/06/ITA, detected in a captive lion cub with severe haemorrhagic enteritis (Martella et al., 2007) and to the canine strain GIV.2/Bari-170/07/IT (90.4% aa), detected in a young dog with diarrhea (Martella et al., 2008). Using baculovirus-expressed VP1 of the lion NoV strain GIV.2/Pistoia/387/06/ITA, antibodies specific for GIV NoVs have been identified in 16.1% of cats

in Italy (Di Martino et al., 2010), providing indirect evidence for the circulation of these NoVs in felines.

In addition, the RNA of GIV.2 NoVs has been detected in 1.2% of faecal samples of cats with enteritis in Japan (Soma et al., 2014). Upon genome sequencing, the feline NoV strain cat/GVI.1/JPN/2012/M49 (Takano et al., 2015) was found to be more similar (87.0% aa identity) in the full-length ORF2 to the canine NoV GVI.1/Bari/91/07/IT (Martella et al., 2009).

Altogether these findings indicate that diverse NoV strains may infect cats, as observed in dogs, and that the feline and canine host may be infected by the same NoV strains, thus constituting an enlarged host reservoir for these animal NoVs. In order to draw a more complete picture of NoVs molecular epidemiology in cats, in this study a collection of faecal specimens from diarrhoeic and healthy animals was screened using either broadly-reactive primers for caliciviruses and primers specific for NoVs.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Sampling

A total of 105 stool samples from domestic cats aged 2–12 months were collected from April to July 2013 in three different shelters located in South Italy. The faecal panel consisted of 48 samples from cats with signs of mild to severe gastroenteritis and 57 samples from asymptomatic animals. All the samples were stored at -80°C until use.

2.2. RNA and DNA extraction

Faecal specimens (10%) were re-suspended in phosphate-buffered saline pH 7.2, and the debris were removed by centrifugation at $8,000 \times g$ for 5 min. DNA and RNA extracts were prepared using the DNAeasy® and QIAamp® viral RNA kit (Qiagen GmbH, Hilden, Germany), according to the manufacturer's instructions and stored at -80°C until use.

2.3. Screening by RT-PCR and PCR

To assess the presence of NoV RNA, the samples were screened using a broadly reactive primer pair, p289-p290, targeted to highly conserved motifs DYSKWDST and YGDD of the RNA-dependent RNA polymerase (RdRp) region of the polymerase complex (Jiang et al., 1999). In the samples yielding amplicons of the expected sizes, the presence of NoV was confirmed using norovirus-specific primer pair JV12Y-JV13I (Vennema et al., 2002). All the fecal samples were also tested by PCR or RT-PCR for feline parvovirus (FPV) (Buonavoglia et al., 2001), feline enteric coronavirus (FECV) (Gunn-Moore et al., 1998) and feline kobuviruses (FeKoV) (Di Martino et al., 2015).

2.4. Sequence and phylogenetic analysis of the NoV strains

The amplicons were excised from the gel and purified using a QIAquick gel extraction kit (Qiagen

GmbH, Hilden, Germany). The fragment was then subjected to direct sequencing using BigDye Terminator Cycle chemistry and 3730 DNA Analyzer (Applied Biosystems, Foster, CA). Basic Local Alignment Search Tool (BLAST; http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov) and FASTA (http://www.ebi.ac.uk/fasta33) with default values were used to find homologous hits. The sequence of ~3.4-kb fragment at the 3' end of the genome of one such strain, TE/77-13/ITA, including the partial RdRp gene and the complete ORF2 and ORF3 genes, was determined by 3' RACE protocol, as previously described (Wang et al., 2005; Martella et al., 2009). cDNA was synthesized by SuperScript III First-Strand cDNA synthesis kit (Invitrogen Ltd, Milan, Italy) with primer VN3T20. PCR was then performed with TaKaRa La Taq polymerase (Takara Bio Europe S.A.S. Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France) with primers p290 and VN3T20. Finally, the amplicons were purified and cloned by using TOPO® XL Cloning Kit (Invitrogen Ltd, Milan, Italy). Additional primers were designed to determine the complete 3.4 kb sequences by an overlapping strategy. Sequence editing and multiple alignments were performed with the BioEdit software package, version 2.1 (Hall et al., 1999). Phylogenetic analysis (Neighbor-Joining) with bootstrap analysis (1,000 replicates) was conducted by using the MEGA software package v3.0 (Kumar et al., 2004). The sequence obtained was analyzed with Simplot (Lole et al., 1999) using a window size of 200 and step size of 20, with gap strip off and Hamming correction on.

3. Results

Out of 105 samples, 3 (2.8%) contained NoVs RNA, either alone (0.9%, 1/105) or in mixed infections with FeKoV or FECV (1.9%, 2/105). Sixteen samples (15.2%) were found to contain FPV DNA alone. All the NoV positive samples were identified from diarrhoeic cats with a prevalence rate of 6.2% (3/48), while they were not detected from asymptomatic animals (0/57). By sequence comparison in the short RdRp fragment, the viruses TE/68-13, ME/78-13 and TE/77-13/ITA shared 89.9-93.2% nt and 90.8-95.3% aa identities to each other and displayed the highest identity (91.0-93.0% nt and 97.0-98.0% aa) to the prototype GIV.2 strain lion/Pistoia/387/06/ITA.

For the strain TE/77-13/ITA the sequence of ~3.4-kb fragment at the 3' end of the genome, including the partial RdRp (0.8 kb) and the complete ORF2 and ORF3 (GenBank accession number KT245136), was sequenced and the genome organization was determined. Phylogenetic analysis (Kumar et al., 2004) was based on the 750-nt sequence of the COOH terminus of the polymerase complex of the carnivore NoV strains available in the databases. Also, RdRp sequences of human GIV.1 NoVs were included in the analysis and used to calculate a nt identity matrix. By visual inspection of the tree, the carnivore NoVs segregated in at least three different genetic clusters (Fig. 1). The strain cat/TE/77-13/ITA was grouped (bootstrap value 100%) with the feline NoV strains lion/GIV.2/Pistoia/387/06/ITA, cat/GIV.2/CU081210E/USA/2010 and cat/GVI.1/JPN/2012/M49 (Martella et al., 2007; Pinto et al., 2012; Takano et al., 2015), with a nt identity of 90.8-94.0%. This group shared identity of 82.3-85.4% to the recombinant NoV dog/GVI.1/91/2007/ITA and to the GIV.2 strains dog/170/07/ITA and dog/Thessaloniki/30/08/GR (Martella et al., 2008; Martella et al., 2009; Ntafis et al., 2010), which in turn segregated (bootstrap value 99%) in a second cluster (91.6-97.8% nt identity). A minor group, distantly related to the feline NoVs (78.2-79.6% nt identity) and to the canine NoVs GVI.1/91/2007/ITA, GIV.2/170/07/ITA and GIV.2/Thessaloniki/30/08/GR (80.4-82.6%), included the strains dog/GVI.2/C33/Viseu/2007/PRT (Mesquita et al., 2010) and dog/GVI.2/FD53/2007/ITA (unpublished data). The nt identity within this group was 98.8%. One strain, the recombinant dog/GVI.1/FD210/2007/ITA (unpublished data), did not cluster within any three established groups. This strain shared a nt identity of 83.4-85.9% to the feline NoV group, 80.4% to the strains GVI.2/C33/Viseu/2007/PRT and dog/GVI.2/FD53/2007/ITA, 87.6-88.6% to the other canine viruses. Two additional clusters were resolved in the tree that included, respectively, the human GIV.1 strains detected from stool and sewage samples in different geographic settings (Fankhauser et al., 2002; La Rosa et al., 2008; Ao et al., 2014; Eden et al., 2014; Han et al., 2014) and GIV.1 NoVs found in sewage samples in Italy in 2008-2009 (La Rosa et al., 2010). The nt identity between this two groups was 87.0-91.5%.

The ORF2 of strain TE/77-13/ITA was 1,719 nt in length and encoded a VP1 capsid protein with a predicted size of 572 aa. ORF3 was 795 nt long and encoded a VP2 protein of 264 aa. A 16-nucleotide (nt) overlap was present in the ORF1-ORF2 junction region.

In the complete VP1, the strain TE/77-13/ITA was most closely related (81.0-84.0% nt and 93.0-94.0% aa) to the strains dog/GVI.2/C33/Viseu/2007/PRT and dog/GVI.2/FD53/2007/ITA, while identity to the feline strain cat/NoV/GVI.1/JPN/2012/M49 and to the canine strain GVI.1/Bari/91/2007/ITA (Martella et al., 2009) was 70.0-71.0% nt and 80.0-81.0% aa. Strain TE/77-13/ITA displayed <54.0% aa identity to animal and human GIV NoVs. Phylogenetic analysis was performed with a selection of complete capsid sequences representative of the *Norovirus* genus. In the VP1-based tree (Fig. 2), strain TE/77-13/ITA segregated with the canine NoVs GVI.2/C33/Viseu/2007/PRT and GVI.2/FD53/2007/ITA (bootstrap value, 100%), into genogroup GVI, genotype 2. A nucleotide identity plot of the genome of strain TE/77-13/ITA was elaborated, in comparison with the canine strain dog/NoV/GVI.2/C33/Viseu/2007/PRT and the feline strains cat/NoV/GVI.1/JPN/2012/M49 and cat/NoV/GIV.2/CU081210E/USA/2010 (Fig. 3). As also suggested by the RdRp- and VP1-based phylogenetic analyses, strain TE/77-13/ITA displayed a recombinant origin, sharing the polymerase gene with GIV.2 animal NoVs, and the VP1 gene with canine GVI.2 NoVs. The RNA cross-over was mapped to ORF1-ORF2 junction region, that is considered a recombination hot spot for NoVs (Bull et al., 2005).

4. Discussion

In this study direct evidence was collected for circulation of NoVs in cats. NoVs were detected in cats with enteric signs whilst they were not identified in samples collected from healthy animals used as control study group. Experimental inoculation of specific pathogen free cats with the feline GVI.1 strain JPN/2012/M49 can induce enteritis signs, diarrhoea and vomiting (Takano et al., 2015). Although the pathogenic role of NoV in cats should be confirmed in larger epidemiological studies and, possibly, in experimental infections with other NoV genotypes, these findings seem to indicate a possible role of these viruses as feline enteric pathogens.

Based on sequence and phylogenetic analysis of the 3' partial sequence of ORF1 spanning 750 nt, at the COOH terminus of the polymerase complex, within the genogroup GIV different genetic lineages could be distinguished. The feline strain TE/77-13/ITA possessed a polymerase gene of the same lineage as the feline NoV strains cat/NoV/GVI.1/JPN/2012/M49 and cat/NoV/GIV.2/CU081210E/USA/2010, and as the lion NOV strain GIV.2/Pistoia/387/06/ITA. Interestingly, inconsistencies were observed between the RdRp- and capsid-based phylogeny, that are suggestive of a potential recombinant nature. Strain TE/77-13/ITA, in the full-length VP1 capsid

gene, closely resembled the canine GVI.2 strains C33/Viseu/2007/PRT and FD53/2007/ITA. Following strictly the outlines of Zheng's classification (Zheng et al., 2006), we classified the novel feline NoV, together with the canine strains Viseu and FD53, as a genotype 2 (>85% pairwise aa identity intergenotypes), within the genogroup GVI (>55% pairwise aa identity intergenogroups). Accordingly, cats and dogs may harbor NoVs of the same genotypes, GIV.2, GVI.1 and GVI.2. Circulation of NoVs genetically related in different host species has been already demonstrated. Porcine NoVs cluster in GII (Wang et al., 2005), but within different genotypes (GII.11, GII.18, and GII.19) from those infecting humans. GIII NoVs have been detected in large and small ruminants, with GIII.1 and GIII.2 (Liu et al., 1999; Oliver eta la., 20017) found in cattle and GIII.3 in sheep (Wolf et al., 2009). However, unlike small carnivores, circulation of NoV strains belonging to the same genotypes in heterologous species has not been reported thus far.

This intriguing finding poses several questions. Binding of GVI.2 and GVI NoVs in dog tissues seems to be mediated by histo-blood group antigens (HBGAs) (Caddy et al., 2014) and therefore to be genetically determined, as observed in humans (Marionneau et al., 2002). This may suggests that dogs and cats share a similar pattern of HBGAs as attachment factor for NoV infections. Also, virus-like particles of seven different human NoV genotypes (GI.1, GI.2, GI.3, GII.3, GII.4, GII.6, and GII.12) have been shown to be able to bind to canine gastrointestinal tissues (Caddy et al., 2015). It will be interesting to assess whether cats may also be infected by human NoVs, as observed in dogs (Summa et al., 2012; Caddy et al., 2015), as this may have implications for the transmission of human NoVs

Recombination among NoVs of domestic carnivores has been already described. The canine NoV strain Bari/91/07/ITA, resembles GIV.2 NoVs in its polymerase gene whilst it is genetically unrelated in the VP1 gene to GIV NoV (Martella et al., 2009). The feline NoV strain, JPN/2012/M49, (Takano et al., 2015) possesses a GIV.2 RdRp region, and a GVI.1 ORF2 related to the canine virus Bari/91/07/ITA (87.0% aa identity). In all the cases, the site of recombination was mapped to the ORF1/ORF2 junction region. This part of NoV genome is highly conserved and has been individuated as a preferential recombination site (Bull et al., 2005). Recombination has been shown to strongly influence the evolution and epidemiology of human NoVs (Ambert-Balay et al., 2005; Reuter et al., 2006) and surely poses a challenge for the development of specific diagnostic tools for NoV of carnivores. Analysis of the RdRp fragment cannot be used to characterize unequivocally these animal NoVs and a definitive characterization should rely on the ORF2.

4. Conclusions

The development of molecular assays for caliciviruses and for NoVs has allowed gathering epidemiological information about these viruses in several animal species, including domestic carnivores. It is now clear that cats and dogs may harbor NoVs of several genotypes and genogroups, although the clinical relevance of these viruses remains to be investigated.

Gathering information on the genetic diversity of animal NoVs will be useful to optimise/develop direct and indirect diagnostic tools, and to investigate more effectively the epidemiology of NoVs in carnivores. In addition, as NoVs of carnivores are suspected to have a zoonotic relevance (Peasey et al., 2004; Mesquita et al., 2013; Di Martino et al., 2014; Caddy et al., 2015), this will be useful to understand the extent of inter-species transmission from cat to dogs, and viceversa, from carnivores to humans.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported with funds from the grant "Calicivirus nei carnivori e nell'uomo: caratterizzazione molecolare, epidemiologia, implicazioni zoonosiche – PRIN 2008".

References

Ambert-Balay, K., Bon, F., Le Guyader, F., Pothier, P., Kohli, E., 2005. Characterization of new recombinant noroviruses. J. Clin. Microbiol. 43, 5179–5186.

Ao,Y.Y., Yu, J.M., Li,L.L., Jin, M., Duan, Z.J., 2014. Detection of human norovirus GIV.1 in China: a case report. J. Clin. Virol. 61, 298-301.

Bertolotti-Ciarlet, A., Crawford, S.E., Hutson, A.M., Estes, M.K., 2003. The 3' end of Norwalk virus mRNA contains determinants that regulate the expression and stability of the viral capsid protein VP1: a novel function for the VP2 protein. J. Virol. 21, 11603-11615.

Bull, R.A., Hansman, G.S., Clancy, L.E., Tanaka M.M., Rawlinson, W.D., White, P.A., 2005. Norovirus recombination in ORF1/ORF2 overlap. Emerg. Infect. Dis. 11, 1079–1085.

Buonavoglia, C., Martella, V., Pratelli, A., Tempesta, M., Cavalli, A., Buonavoglia, D., Bozzo, G., Elia, G., Decaro, N., Carmichael, L., 2001. Evidence for evolution of canine parvovirus type 2 in Italy. J. Gen. Virol. 82, 3021-3025.

Caddy, S., Breiman, A., le Pendu, J., Goodfellow, I., 2014. Genogroup IV and VI Canine Noroviruses Interact with Histo-Blood Group Antigens. J. Virol. 88, 10377-10391. Caddy, S.L., de Rougemont, A., Emmott, E., El-Attar, L., Mitchell, J.A., Hollinshead, M., Belliot, G., Brownlie, J., Le Pendu, J., Goodfellow, I., 2015. Evidence for human norovirus infection of dogs in the United kingdom. J. Clin. Microbiol. 53, 1873-1883.

Di Martino, B., Di Profio, F., Ceci, C., Di Felice, E., Green, K.Y., Bok, K., De Grazia, S., Giammanco, G.M., Massirio, I., Lorusso, E., Buonavoglia, C., Marsilio, F., Martella, V., 2014. Seroprevalence of Norovirus genogroup IV antibodies among humans, Italy, 2010–2011. Emerg. Infect. Dis. 20, 1828-1832.

Di Martino, B., Di Profio, F., Melegari, I., Marsilio, F., Martella, V., 2015. Detection of feline kobuviruses in diarrhoeic cats, Italy. Vet. Microbiol. 176, 186-189.

Di Martino, B., Marsilio, F., Di Profio, F., Lorusso, E., Friedrich, K.G., Buonavoglia, C., Martella, V., 2010. Detection of antibodies against norovirus genogroup GIV in carnivores. Clin. Vaccine Immunol. 17, 180-182.

Eden, J.S., Lim, K.L., White, P.A., 2012. Complete genome of the human Norovirus GIV.1 strain Lake Macquarie. J. Virol. 86, 10251-10252.

Fankhauser, R.L., Monroe, S.S., Noel, J.S., Humphrey, C.D., Bresee, J.S., Parashar, U.D., Ando, T., Glass, R.I., 2002. Epidemiologic and molecular trends of 'Norwalk-like viruses associated with outbreaks of gastroenteritis in the United States. J. Infect. Dis. 186, 1-7.

Green, K.Y. Caliciviridae: The Noroviruses. In: Knipe DM, Howley PM, Griffin DE, Lamb RA, Martin MA, Roizman B, et al. (Eds.), 2007. Fields virology, 5th ed. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, Philadelphia, pp 949–979.

Green, K.Y, 2013. Caliciviridae: The Noroviruses. D.M. Knipe, P.M. Howley (Eds.), Fields Virology, Lippincott, Williams, and Wilkins, Philadelphia (2013), pp. 582–608.

Gunn-Moore, D.A., Gruffydd-Jones, T.J., Harbour, D.A., 1998. Detection of feline coronaviruses by culture and reverse transcriptase-polymerase chain reaction of blood samples from healthy cats and cats with clinical feline infectious peritonitis. Vet. Microbiol. 62, 193-205.

Hall, T.A., 1999. BioEdit: a user-friendly biological sequence alignment and analysis program for Windows 95/98/NT. Nucleic. Acids. Symp. Ser. 41, 95-98.

Han, T.H., Kim, S.C., Kim, S.T., Chung, C.H., Chung, J.Y., 2014. Detection of norovirus genogroup IV, klassevirus, and pepper mild mottle virus in sewage samples in South Korea. Arch. Virol. 159, 457-463.

Jiang, X., Huang, P.W., Zhong, W.M., Farkas, T., Cubitt, D.W., Matson, D.O., 1999. Design and evaluation of a primer pair that detects both Norwalk- and Sapporo-like caliciviruses by RT-PCR. J. Virol. Methods 83, 145–154.

Kumar, S., Tamura, K., Nei, M., 2004. MEGA3: integrated software for molecular evolutionary genetics analysis and sequence alignment. Brief. Bioinform. 5, 153–163.

La Rosa,G., Iaconelli,M., Pourshaban,M., Fratini,M., Muscillo,M., 2010. Molecular detection and genetic diversity of norovirus genogroup IV: a yearlong monitoring of sewage throughout Italy. Arch. Virol. 155, 589-593.

La Rosa, G., Pourshaban, M., Iaconelli, M., Muscillo, M., 2008. Detection of genogroup IV noroviruses in environmental and clinical samples and partial sequencing through rapid amplification of cDNA ends. Arch. Virol. 153, 2077-2083.

Liu, B.L., Lambden, P.R., Günther, H., Otto, P., Elschner, M., Clarke, I.N., 1999 Molecular characterization of a bovine enteric calicivirus: relationship to the Norwalk-like viruses. J. Virol. 73, 819-825

Lole, K.S., Bollinger, R.C., Paranjape, R.S., Gadkari, D., Kulkarni, S.S., Novak, N.G., Ingersoll, R., Sheppard, H.W., Ray, S.C., 1999. Full-length human immunodeficiency virus type 1 genomes from subtype C-infected seroconverters in India, with evidence of intersubtype recombination. J. Virol. 73, 152–160.

Marionneau, S., Ruvoën, N., Le Moullac-Vaidye, B., Clement, M., Cailleau-Thomas, A., Ruiz-Palacois, G., Huang, P., Jiang, X., Le Pendu, J., 2002. Norwalk virus binds to histo-blood group antigens present on gastroduodenal epithelial cells of secretor individuals. Gastroenterology 122, 1967–1977.

Martella, V., Campolo, M., Lorusso, E., Cavicchio, P., Camero, M., Bellacicco, A.L., Elia, G., Greco,G., Corrente, M., Desario, C., Arista, C., Banyaj, K., Koopmans, M., Buonavoglia, C., 2007.Norovirus in captive lion cub (Panthera leo). Emerg. Infect. Dis. 13, 1071-1073.

Martella, V., Lorusso, E., Decaro, N., Elia, G., Radogna, A., D'Abramo, M., Desario, C., Cavalli, A., Corrente, M., Germinaro, C.A., Banyai, K., Di Martino, B., Marsilio, F., Carmichael, L.E., Buonavoglia, C., 2008. Detection and molecular characterization of a canine norovirus. Emerg. Infect. Dis. 14, 1306-1308.

Martella, V., Decaro, N., Lorusso, E., Radogna, A., Moschidou, P., Amorisco, F., Lucente, M.S., Desario, C., Elia, G., Banyai, K., Carmichael, L.E., Buonavoglia, C., 2009. Genetic heterogeneity and recombination in canine noroviruses. J. Virol. 83, 11391-11396.

Mesquita, J.R., Barclay, L., Nascimento, M.S., Vinjé, J., 2010. Novel norovirus in dogs with diarrhea. Emerg. Infect. Dis. 16, 980-982.

Mesquita, J.R., Costantini, V.P., Cannon, J.L., Lin, S.C., Nascimento, M.S., Vinjé, J., 2013. Presence of antibodies against genogroup VI norovirus in humans. Virol. J. 10, 176.

Ntafis, V., Xylouri, E., Radogna, A., Buonavoglia, C., Martella, V., 2010. Outbreak of canine norovirus infection in young dogs. J. Clin. Microbiol. 48, 2605-2608.

Oliver, S.L., Asobayire, E., Charpilienne, A., Cohen, J., Bridger, J.C., 2007. Complete genomic characterization and antigenic relatedness of genogroup III, genotype 2 bovine noroviruses. Arch. Virol. 152, 257-272

Patel, M.M., Widdowson, M.A., Glass, R.I., Akazawa, K., Vinjé, J., Parashar, U.D., 2008. Systematic literature review of role of noroviruses in sporadic gastroenteritis. Emerg. Infect. Dis. 14, 1224 – 1231.

Peasey, A.E., Ruiz-Palacios, G.M., Quigley, M., Newsholme, W., Martinez, J., Rosales, G., Jiang, X., Blumenthal, U.J., 2004. Seroepidemiology and risk factors for sporadic norovirus/Mexico strain.J. Infect. Dis. 189, 2027-2036.

Pinto, P., Wang, Q., Chen, N., Dubovi, E.J., Daniels, J.B., Millward, L.M., Buonavoglia, C., Martella,V., Saif, L.J., 2012. Discovery and genomic characterization of noroviruses from a gastroenteritisoutbreak in domestic cats in the US. PLoS One 7, e32739.

Reuter, G., Vennema, H., Koopmans, M., Szucs, G., 2006. Epidemic spread of recombinant noroviruses with four capsid types in Hungary. J. Clin. Virol. 35, 84–88.

Soma, T., Nakagomi, O., Nakagomi, T., Mochizuki, M., 2014. Detection of norovirus and sapovirus from diarrheic dogs and cats in Japan. Microbiol. Immunol. 59, 123-128.

Summa, M., von Bonsdorff, C.H., Maunula, L., 2012. Pet dogs—a transmission route for human noroviruses? J. Clin. Virol. 53, 244–247.

Takano, T., Kusuhara, H., Kuroishi, A., Takashina, M., Doki, T., Nishinaka, T., Hohdatsu, T., 2015. Molecular characterization and pathogenicity of a genogroup GVI feline norovirus. Vet. Microbiol. 178, 201-217.

Vennema, H., de Bruin, E., Koopmans, M., 2002. Rational optimization of generic primers used for Norwalk-like virus detection by reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction. J. Clin. Virol. 25, 233-235.

Wang, Q.H., Han, M.G., Cheetham, S., Souza, M., Funk, J.A., Saif, L.J., 2005. Porcine noroviruses related to human noroviruses. Emerg. Infect. Dis. 11, 1874-1881.

Wolf, S., Williamson, W., Hewitt, J., Lin, S., Rivera-Aban, M., Ball, A., Scholes, P., Savill, M., Greening, G.E., 2009. Molecular detection of norovirus in sheep and pigs in New Zealand farms. Vet Microbiol 133, 184–189.

Zheng, D.P., Ando, T., Frankhouser, R.L., Beard, R.S., Glass, R.I., Monroe, S.S., 2006. Norovirus classification and proposed strain nomenclature. Virology 346, 312-323.

Figure captions

Fig. 1 - Phylogenetic tree based on the 750-nt sequence of the COOH terminus of the polymerase complex. Tree was generated using the neighbor joining method and p-distance correction, supplying a statistical support with bootstrapping of 1000 replicates. The scale bar indicates nucleotide substitutions per site. The sequence detected in this study is in boldface. The nt identity among strains of the same genetic group is shown.

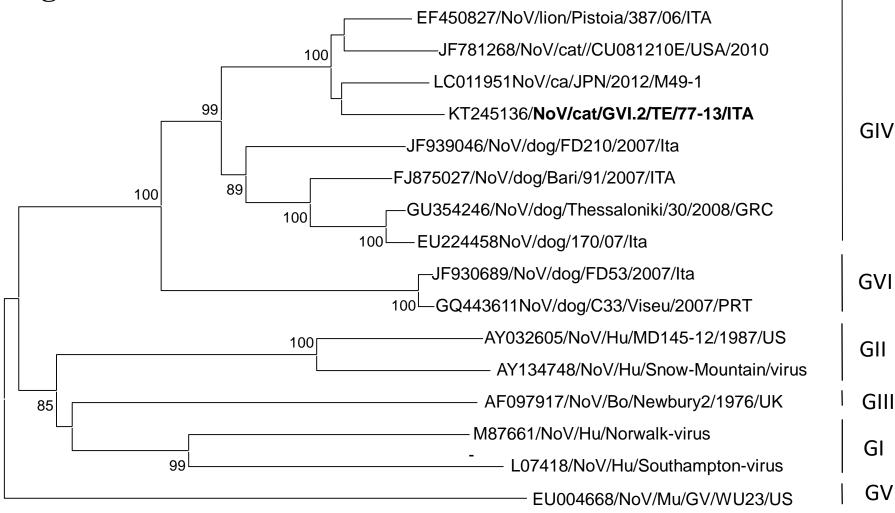
Fig. 2 - Phylogenetic tree based on the full-length as sequence of the VP1 protein of NoVs. Tree was generated using the neighbor joining method and Poisson correction, supplying a statistical support with bootstrapping of 1000 replicates. The sequence detected in this study is in boldface.

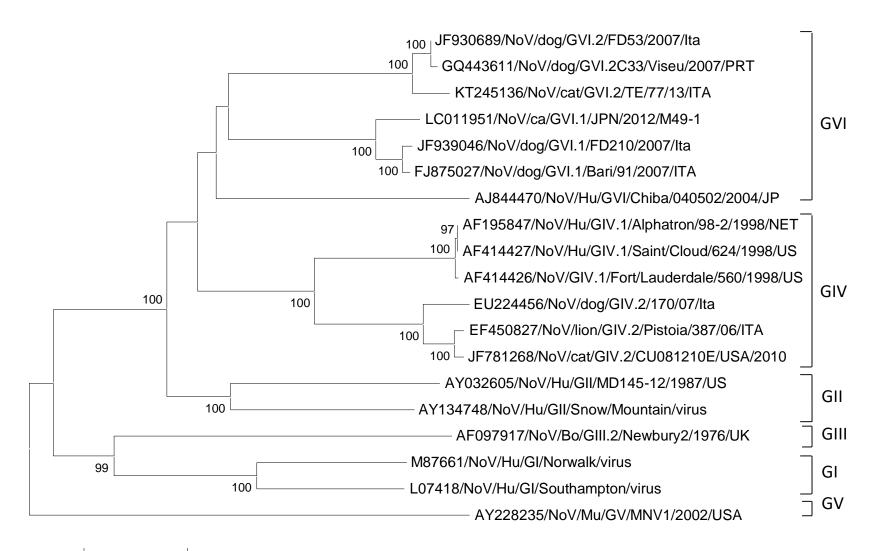
Fig. 3 - Nucleotide identity plot. The genome of strain cat/NoV/GVI.2/TE/77-13/ITA (the 3' end of ORF1 and the complete ORF2) was compared with those of the NoV strains dog/GVI.2/C33/Viseu/2007/PRT, cat/GVI.1/JPN/2012/M49 and cat/GIV.2/CU081210E/USA/2010. The arrow indicates the crossover site at the ORF1-ORF2 junction region.

Conflict of interest statement

All Authors declare that there are no financial or other relationships that might lead to a conflict of interest. All authors have seen and approved the manuscript and have contributed significantly to the work.

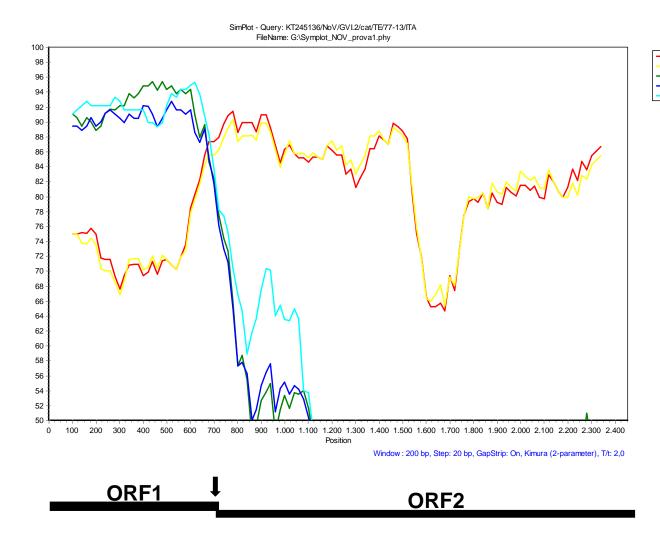
Fig. 1





0.1

Fig. 3



JF93068/NoV/GVI.2/dog/FD53/ITA
GQ443611/NoV/GVI.2/dog/C33/Viseu/PRT
EF450827/NoV/GIV.2/lion/Pistoia/387/06/ITA
JF781268/NoV/GIV.2/cat/CU081210E/US
LC011950/NoV/GVI.1/ca/JPN/M49-1

Table 3 Proposed new numbering system for Genogroup I and II capsid and polymerase genotypes and comparison with previously published nomenclature

ORF2 (capsid)						ORF1 (polymerase)	
Proposed types	types in [22]	types in [6]	types in [4]	Prototype strain	Proposed types	Prototype strain	ORF2 ORF1
I.1	I.1	I.1	I.1	Hu/NoV/GI.P1/GI.1/Norwalk/1968/U S	I.P1	Same as ORF2	M87661
I.2	I.2	I.2	I.2	Hu/NoV/GI.P2/GI.2/Southampton/19 91/UK	I.P2	Same as ORF2	L07418
I.3	I.3	I.3, I.11, I.12, I.13, I.14	I.3	Hu/NoV/GI.Pa/GI.3/Desert Shield 395/1990/SA	I.P3	Hu/NoV/GI.P3/GI.3 /VA98115/1998	U04469 AY038598
I.4	I.4	I.4	I.4	Hu/NoV/GI.P4/GI.4/Chiba 407/1987/JP	I.P4	Same as ORF2	AB042808
I.5	I.5	I.5, I.9	1.5	Hu/NoV/GI.5/Musgrove/1989/UK	I.P5	Hu/NoV/GI.P5/OB2005138/2 005/NL	AJ277614 NS ¹
I.6	I.6	I.6, I.8	I.6	Hu/NoV/GI.P6/GI.6/BS5/1997/DE	I.P6	Same as ORF2	AF093797
I.7	I.7	I.7	I.7	Hu/NoV/GI.7/Winchester/1994/UK	I.P7	Hu/NoV/GI.P7/OB20030541/ 2003/NL	AJ277609 NS ¹
I.8	I.8	I.10	I.8	Hu/NoV/GI.8/Boxer/2001/US	I.P8	?/NoV/GI.P8/SW104506	AF538679 NS ¹
I.9				Hu/NoV/GI.P9/GI.9/Vancouver730/2 004/CA	I.Pe→9	Hu/NoV/GI.9/GI.P9/Chateller ault709/2004/France	HQ637267 EF529737
					I.Pa ²	Hu/NoV/GI.Pa/GI.3/Desert Shield 395/1990/SA	U04469
					I.Pb ¹	Hu/NoV/GI.P6/GI.PbWUG1/ JP	AB081723
					I.Pc ¹	Hu/NoV/GI.Pc/GI.5/SzUG1/J P	AB039774
					I.Pd ¹	Hu/NoV/GI.Pd/GI.3/Vesoul5 76/2003/FR	EF529738
					I.Pf	Nu/NoV/GI.Pf/GI.3/Otofuke/ 1979/JP	U07611 AB187514
II.1	II.1	II.1	II.1	Hu/NoV/GII.P1/GII.11/Hawaii/1971/ US	II.P1	Same as ORF2	
II.2	П.2	П.2	II.2	Hu/NoV/GII.P2/GII.2/Melksham/199 4/UK	II.P2	Same as ORF2	X81879
II.3	II.3	II.3	II.3	Hu/NoV/GII.P3/GII.3/Toronto 24/1991/CA	II.P3	Same as ORF2	U02030
II.4	II.4	II.4	II.4	Hu/NoV/GII.P4/GII.4/Bristol/1993/U K	II.P4	Same as ORF2	X76716
II.5	II.5	II.5	II.5	Hu/NoV/GII.5/Hillingdon/1990/UK	II.P5	Hu/NoV/GII.P5/GII.5/NLV/ MOH/99/1999/HU	AJ277607 AF397156
II.6	II.6	II.6	II.6	Hu/NoV/GII.6/Seacroft/1990/UK	II.P6	Hu/NoV/GII.P6/GII.6Saitama U16/JP	AJ277620 AB039778
II.7	II.7	II.7	II.7	Hu/NoV/GII.7/Leeds/1990/UK	II.P7	Hu/NoV/GII.P7/GII.6/Saitam a U4/JP	AJ277608 AB039777
II.8	II.8	II.8	II.8	Hu/NoV/GII.8/Amsterdam/1998/NL	II.P8	Hu/NoV/GII.P8/GII.8/Saitam a U25/JP	AF195848 AB039780
II.9	II.9	II.9	II.9	Hu/NoV/GII.P7/GII.9/VA97207/199 6/US	ND	u 020/01	AY038599 ND
II.10	II.10	II.10	II.10	Hu/NoV/GII.10/Erfurt546/2000/DE	ND		AF427118 ND

 $^{^1}$ Not submitted to GenBank yet 2 Bull.et al. [13]

II.11	II.11			Po/NoV/GII.P19/GII.11/Sw918/1997/ JP	II.P11	Po/NoV/GII.P11/GII.11/Sw91 8/1997/JP	AB126320 AB074893
II.12	II.12	II.12	II.12	Hu/NoV/GII.12/Wortley/1990/UK	II.P12	Hu/NoV/GII.P12/GII.3/5017. 34/2003/JP	AJ277618 EU187437
II.13	II.13	II.14	II.13	Hu/NoV/GII.13/Fayetteville/1998/US	ND		AY113106 ND
II.14	II.14	II.13	II.14	Hu/NoV/GII.14/M7/1999/US	ND		AY130761 ND
II.15	II.15		II.15	Hu/NoV/GII.15/J23/1999/US	II.P15	Hu/NoV/GII.P15/GII.15/Hiro shima/66-1110/2006/JP	AY130762 AB360387
II.16	II.16	II.15	II.16	Hu/NoV/GII.P16/GII.16/Tiffin/1999/ US	II.P16	Hu/NoV/GII.P16/GII.16/Hiro shima/60-1015/2005/JP	AY502010 AY772730
II.17	II.17	II.11	II.17	Hu/NoV/GII.P16/GII.17/CS- E1/2002/US	II.P17	Hu/NoV/GII.P17/GII.17/Kaw asaki 2014/JP	AY502009 AB983218
II.18	II.18			Po/NoV/GII.P18/GII.18/OH- QW101/2003/US	II.P18	Same as ORF2	AY823304
II.19	II.19			Po/NoV/GII.P19/GII.19/OH- QW170/2003/US	II.P19	Same as ORF2	AY823306
II.20				Hu/NoV/GII.20/Luckenwalde591/20 02/DE	II.P20	Hu/GII.P20/GII.20/Leverkuse n267/2005/DE	EU373815 EU424333
II.21		II.16		Hu/NoV/GII.21/IF1998/2003/IR	ND		AY675554 ND
П.22				Hu/NoV/GII.P22/GII.22/YURI/JP	II.P22	Hu/NoV/GII.P22/GII.22/Mina to/N1/6/1999/JP	AB083780 AB233471
					II.Pa	Hu/NoV/GII.Pa/GII.3/ Arg320/ 1995/ARG	AF190817
					II.Pb	Hu/NoV/GII.Pb/GII.2/Pont de Roide 673/2004/France	AY682549
					II.Pc	Hu/NoV/GII.Pc/GII.2/Snow Mountain virus/1976/US	AY134748
					II.Pd	Hu/NoV/GII.Pd/II.5/ Hokkaido/133/2003/JP	AB212306
					II.Pe	Hu/NoV/GII.Pe/GII.4//OC071 38/2007/JP	AB434770
					II.Pf	Hu/N0V/GII.Pf/GII.5/S63/19 99/FR	AY682550
					II.Pg	Hu/GII.Pg/GII.13/Goulburn Valley G5175 B/1983/AUS	DQ379714
					II.Ph	Hu/NoV/GII.Ph/GII.2/OC970 07/1997/JP	AB089882
					II.Pj	Hu/NoV/GII.PJ/GII.2/E3/199 7/Crete	AY682552
					II.Pk	Hu/NoV/GII.Pk/OC96065/19 96/JP	AF315813
					II.Pm	Hu/NoV/GII.Pm/GII.12/Pune/ PC24/2006/India	EU921353