

THE MOST VULNERABLE BREED

When Cornell dermatologist William H. Miller, VMD, and his colleagues researched the medical records of 1,407 cats with dermatologic diagnoses made at the college's teaching hospital from 1988 to 2003, they saw a pattern: Himalayan cats were much more likely than other cats to be diagnosed with a skin disease. The reason for the high frequency in Himalayan cats is unknown but probably related to breeding practices that can increase the frequency of genetically-influenced diseases like allergy.

According to their study published in April 2013 in the *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery*, the most common diagnoses were allergies (inhalant or environmental) and bacterial folliculitis/furunculosis.

"The high frequency of allergic diseases not only shows that allergies are fairly common in the cat, but that they are also frustrating to manage," Dr. Miller says. "Allergies are forever, which means they have to be treated forever. Many of these cases are referred to specialists so that the cat receives the most up-to-date treatments."