

Benefits of Human-Companion Animal Interaction Across Care Settings

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Physical benefits of HAI for pet owners

- Had increased one year survival post MI, via CAST project (Friedmann et al, 1995)
- Elderly had lower blood pressure, triglyceride & cholesterol levels, (Anderson et al 1992)



Dog Walking



- Australian dog owners walked 18 minutes/week more than non-owners and met physical activity recommendations of 150 min/wk
(Bauman et al., 2000)
- US adults who walked dogs accumulated at least 30 minutes of walking in bouts of at least 10 minutes
(Ham & Epping, 2005)

Psychosocial Benefits of Pet Ownership

- 🐾 Older adult pet owners less likely to be depressed.

(Garrity, Stallones, Marx, & Johnson, 1989)



Animal Assisted Activity in LTC

- NH residents who had dog visits were significantly less lonely

(Banks & Banks, 2002)





✿ Alzheimer's patients ate significantly more food when watching fish swim

(Edwards & Beck, 2002)

Animal Assisted Activity in Acute Care

- Hospitalized patients reported less pain, & used fewer analgesics during & after an animal visit

(Stoffel & Braun, 2006)

- Heart failure patients had decreased anxiety & epinephrine levels during & after an animal visit

(Cole, Gawlinski, & Steers, 2005)





- 🐾 **Prison inmates who raised a puppy in their cell had improved self-esteem and internal locus of control**

(Suthers-McCabe, 2004)

Walking for Healthy Hearts, a.k.a. “Dog Walk”

**Is HAI (walking with a dog) a
significant facilitator of compliance
with exercise among subsidized
housing residents?**

Collaborator: Richard Meadows, DVM

- ❖ **Pretest-Posttest design with multiple measurements**
- ❖ **13 residents of 2 housing facilities participated in graduated walking program with certified dog and handler**
- ❖ **Measured:**
 - **# sessions completed, distances walked**
 - **Weight, blood pressure, lipid profile, bone density, standing balance, mood, adherence**





Demographics

	Site #1(50 wk)	Site #2(26 wk)
Gender	6 M, 7 F	6 M, 7 F
Race	1 AA, 12 Cauc	2 AA, 11 Cauc
Age	40-80 (X=51)	53-82 (X=59)
Wt. Loss	1-44 (X=14.4)	1-5 (X=5)
Distance Walked	668 mi 300 hrs	467 mi 193 hrs

Adherence

- 🐾 72% in 50-week program
- 🐾 52% in 26-week program

Distances Walked:

- 🐾 668 mi in 300 hrs (50-weeks)
- 🐾 467 mi in 193 hrs (26 weeks)

Perceived Benefits

- ❃ “The dogs need us to walk them—they count on us”
- ❃ “The dogs make me a better person”
- ❃ “I think hanging out with the dogs has improved my mental state. I always feel better when I spend time with the dogs.”

Dog Owners' Perceptions of Visiting their Dog in an Intensive Care Unit

Collaborator:

**F. Anthony Mann, D.V.M., M.S., Dip. ACVS,
Dip. ACVECC**

Professor-Small Animal Emergency & Critical Care

**Jeffrey Davis,
Graduate Student**



Research Questions

- ❖ **What are owners' perspectives about visiting their dog in the ICU of a veterinary medical teaching hospital?**
- ❖ **What are the characteristics of their visit(s) to their hospitalized dog?**

Sample & Method

- ✿ Dog owners (N=100) over age 18 with a dog hospitalized longer than 48 hours in the ICU at VMTH
- ✿ Owners completed anonymous questionnaire while waiting to take their dog home

Table 1: Sample Demographic Description

Variable	Visitors (n=52)*	Non-Visitors (n=48)*
Age	X=44 (Range=20-70)	X=47 (Range=27-70)
Gender	14M, 37F	16 M, 32F
Race	48 Cauc, 1 Hx, 1 Am Indian, 1 Other	44 Cauc, 4 Hx, 2 AA
Marital Status	30 M, 16 NM, 1 W, 1 D	37 M, 3 NM, 1 W, 7 D
Education	2< HS, 3 HS, 10 Some College, 35 Degreed	1<HS, 6 HS, 24 Some College, 15 Degreed 2 Trade School
Number of Children	X=1 (Range=0-4)	X=1.5 (Range=0-4)
Dog's days in ICU	X=5.5 (Range=1-30)	X=5 (Range=2-20)

*Frequency counts in variables may not reflect total n due to missing data.

Table 2: Activities during visits

Activity	Frequency (% of visitors) n=52
Talked to dog	49 (94%)
Petted dog	48 (92%)
Told dog that he or she was going to be OK	45 (86%)
Talked to dog's student	43 (83%)
Comforted dog	42 (81%)
Talked to dog's doctor	40 (77%)
Talked to the staff	31 (60%)
Prayed for dog	26 (50%)
Fed dog	21 (40%)
Combed or brushed dog	3 (5%)
Told dog that it was OK to "let go"	3 (5%)
Other	9 (17%)

Discussion

- ❖ Findings similar for family visits to human patients on:
 - Rationale for visits
 - Length and timing of visits
 - Activities during visits

- ❖ Benefits of visits for dogs yet to be studied



And now, your questions....

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