Oral presentations

Homeless people and their dogs: a study of health and welfare and the human-companion animal bond (H-CAB)

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OBJECTIVES

Pet ownership is common amongst the UK's growing homeless population. Pet ownership can have positive impacts on physical, psychological and social health. For homeless owners, some of the most vulnerable members of society, dogs provide a crucial source of support and companionship. In spite of these benefits, dogs often exist as barriers to homeless services such as accommodation.

The study aims were to assess the impact of pet ownership and the H-CAB on the health and wellbeing of both homeless owners and their dogs.

METHODS

Participants were recruited from services that accommodated homeless dog owners; Nottingham's Vets in the Community clinic and other outreach initiatives, and by direct approach to homeless owners on the streets. The PDSA's Petwise MOT was used to assess canine health and welfare. Semi-structured interviews were used to investigate the implications of the H-CAB, these were anonymised, transcribed and analysed thematically.

RESULTS

Preliminary results suggest that the health and welfare of dogs belonging to homeless owners is not significantly compromised and that dogs often provide crucial support for issues such as mental ill-health, drug and alcohol abuse. Initial findings also indicate that many homeless owners struggle to access services as a result of their dog.

STATEMENT (CONCLUSIONS)

Dogs belonging to homeless owners provide key sources of support and companionship, often helping them manage physical, psychological and even social health. Contrary to the opinion of some, the health and welfare of these dogs is not significantly compromised by the homelessness of the owner, although specific challenges were identified.

Why didn't my client give the medication? A descriptive study of the communication surrounding medicine administration

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OBJECTIVES

Adherence with medication is critical to achieving optimal patient health outcomes. Unfortunately, there is limited evidence regarding factors affecting adherence in veterinary medicine. The aim of this study is to describe the communication surrounding medicine administration.

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METHODS

Clients attending six practices for specific health problem appointments were invited to participate in the study, which involved consultation recording and post-consultation surveys. If the pet was prescribed medication, drug labelling information was recorded, and the client was contacted 4–8 days later to complete a survey regarding adherence. Descriptive statistics were performed and proportional frequencies of responses reported.

RESULTS

Of the 65 consultations recorded, 43 were prescribed medication. Of these 29 responded, giving a response rate of 67.4%. Adherence was 100% in 27.6% (8/29) of respondents but assessment of adherence wasn't possible in 69% (20/29) due to drug formulation (e.g. oral liquid) or deficiencies in drug labelling; dosing duration was not stated on the medication label for 86.2% (25/29) of

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