Service Animals & Animal-Assisted Therapy

The origins of service animals arose from the historic use of guide dogs by individuals with visual disabilities and the establishment of official guide dog training programs after World War I. These guide dogs were trained to meet the specific needs of individuals who were blind or had low vision. When one hears service animals often the first thought is to these guide dog pioneers; however, in this edition of reSearch we specifically explore the topic of service animals and animal-assisted therapy not related to those with visual disabilities.

According to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) “a service animal is any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.” The definition goes on to state that “other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not considered to be service animals” (http://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm). Animals such as miniature horses and monkeys (specifically Capuchin monkeys) have been used in a service capacity; however, there are some limitations on how well these animals can be used in public places (i.e., miniature horses taken in a taxi) or loud environments (i.e., monkeys used outside of the home).

Service animals provide assistance and offer independence to their handlers and are used by a wide range of people with disabilities to assist with navigation, orientation, and balance; alerting an individual to their surroundings or impending seizure activity; and item retrieval. Service animals are protected under the law and allowed access to all areas of public and private businesses where any members of the public, program participants, clients, consumers, patrons, or invitees are allowed to go with limitations to facility safety requirements (i.e., surgery or intensive care unit) or if the service animal is not well controlled, the handler does not take effective action to control the animal, or the animal is not housebroken. Animals that provide comfort or companionship for their owners but that are not trained to perform any specific tasks are not considered service animals under federal law.

Service animals and therapy animals used in animal-assisted activities (AAA) or animal-assisted therapy (AAT) differ in the services provided and protections under the law. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), “[AAA] provide opportunities for motivation, education, or recreation to enhance quality of life. Animal assisted activities are delivered in a variety of environments by specially trained professionals, paraprofessionals, or volunteers in association with animals that meet specific criteria. [AAT] is a goal directed intervention in which an animal meeting specific criteria is an integral part of the treatment process. AAT is delivered and/or directed by health or human service providers working within the scope of their profession. AAT is designed to promote improvement in human physical, social, emotional, or cognitive function. AAT is provided in a variety of settings, and may be group or individual in nature. The process is documented and evaluated” (https://www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Pages/Guidelines-for-Animal-Assisted-Activity-Animal-Assisted-Therapy-and-Resident-Animal-Programs.aspx). Often a therapy animal is owned by an individual

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that happens to use the animal in AAA and AAT environments whereas a service animal is specifically trained to an individual’s specific disability needs and is not a pet/companion first and foremost. Examples of AAA and AAT animals include but are not limited to: cats, dogs, rats, rabbits, horses, and dolphins.

This edition of reSearch provides a “snapshot” of research on service animals and animal-assisted therapy. This “snapshot” presents research related to specific types of disability (i.e. developmental, psychiatric, sensory, and physical disabilities). The combined search terms for this edition of reSearch included: service animals; animal-assisted therapy; and physical, psychiatric, and developmental/cognitive disabilities. A listing of over 100 additional descriptor terms between the NARIC, ERIC, OT Seeker, and the PubMed databases can be found at the end of this document.


References


NIDRR Funded Projects
Related to Service Animals and Animal Assisted Therapy

In addition to document searches, we searched our NIDRR Program Database to locate grantees/projects related to service animals and animal-assisted therapy. The search resulted in five currently funded NIDRR projects. Project information and their publications are offered as additional resources for our patrons.

Explorative Study of Service Animal Utilization in the Workplace
Project Number: H133F120031
Phone: 304/685-9408
Email: Margaret.Glenn@mail.wvu.edu

Personal Assistance Services (PAS) in the 21st Century
Project Number: H133B080002
Phone: 866/727-9577, 415/502-7190 (V), 415/502-5216 (TTY)
Email: melinda.neri@ucsf.edu
www.pascenter.org

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center: Develop and Evaluate Technology for Low Vision, Blindness, and Multi-Sensory Loss
Project Number: H133E110004
Phone: 415/345-2000
Email: rerc@ski.org
www.ski.org/Rehab

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Measurement and Interdependence in Community Living (RRTC/MICL)
Project Number: H133B060018
Phone: 785/864-4095 (V), 785/864-0706 (TTY)
Email: rtcil@ku.edu
www rtcil.org/micl

RRTC on Employment Outcomes for Individuals Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired
Mississippi State University
Project Number: H133B100022
Email: MCapella@colled.msstate.edu
www.blind.msstate.edu
NARIC Accession Number: O18921
ABSTRACT: Handbook provides an overview of rights and obligations under federal disability laws. It answers questions about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including the ADA provisions as they related to employment, state and local governments, public accommodations, communication, transportation, service animals, and ticketing and reservations. Sections also review the Rehabilitation Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, laws that cover housing, Social Security, laws related to air travel, the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act, and state regulations and citations. This book is meant to provide basic information about disability rights, as well as resources for finding out more.

Hoshiyama, M., Noguchi, H., & Tagawa, Yoshikatsu. (2012). *Kinematic analysis of sit to stand by persons with rheumatoid arthritis supported by a service dog.* *Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology,* 7(1), 45-54.
NARIC Accession Number: J63183
ABSTRACT: Study examined the kinesiological effects of the assistance provided by service dogs on transferring from sit to stand in people with rheumatoid arthritis (RA). Twenty-four participants performed a total of 8 experimental transfers of sit to stand, including unassisted transfers, transfers with a cane, and transfers with assistance from a service dog. Movements at the lower-extremity joints were analyzed using a three-dimensional kinematics system and two force plates. At the hip joints, the range of motion changes and energy expenditure with a cane and with the service dog were smaller than that of the unassisted transfers. Transfers with a service dog resulted in less joint movement and less energy used in movements at the knee and ankle joints; participants also scored themselves as requiring less effort on a self-rating scale than in the other conditions. A service dog provides benefits in assisting with transfers from sit to stand by persons with RA. Future studies should consider training the service dogs to assume correct positions and use appropriate timing to support their partners during these transfers.

2011

(N2011). *Fact sheet #5: Service animals.*
NARIC Accession Number: O18273
ABSTRACT: Fact sheet presents information regarding revisions to regulations implementing Title II and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which apply to public/state and local government entities and private businesses/places of public accommodation, respectively that affect service animals. These regulations revise the definition of service animal and add additional provisions, including what inquiries can be made to determine if an animal is a service animal, and when and where a service animal is allowed access.

2010

(2010). *Making the move to managing your own personal assistance services (PAS): A toolkit for youth with disabilities transitioning to adulthood.*
NARIC Accession Number: O17842
ABSTRACT: This toolkit is designed to help transition-age youth with disabilities navigate the complex world of personal assistance services (PAS). For youth transitioning to independent living, issues surrounding managing PAS can be intensified by normal developmental concerns such as striking out on your own and navigating the road into adulthood. This guide assists youth in strengthening some of the most fundamental skills essential for successfully managing their own PAS: effective communication, time-management, working with others, and establishing professional relationships. Topics covered include: understanding the differences between job-related and personal PAS; evaluating individual readiness to live independently and manage PAS; establishing goals in transitioning to greater independence; identifying individual PAS needs; considering a service dog; advertising for, interviewing, and hiring personal assistants; covering the costs of PAS; managing and training assistants; handling awkward moments with personal assistants; recognizing abusive situations; and firing personal assistants.
assistant. Sample worksheets, questions, and charts provide readers clear, helpful examples of things to consider along the path to greater independence.


NARIC Accession Number: J62817
Project Number: H133A060079
ABSTRACT: On July 23, 2010, the Department of Justice revised regulations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) concerning service animals. The revised regulations define “service animal” as a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. A service animal is not a pet. Regardless of business’ no pet policy, a service animal must be allowed to accompany a person with a disability wherever customers are permitted to go. If a business is uncertain that a dog is a service animal, the proprietor may ask which tasks the animal has been individually trained to perform. A deposit cannot be imposed on an individual with a service animal, even when pet deposits are required. Transportation providers may not charge higher fares or refuse to provide service to individuals with service animals. Only when a service animal’s behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, or when a service animal’s presence would result in a fundamental alteration to the nature of the business can a service animal be denied access. Therapy and emotional-support animals are not service animal under the ADA.

2009


NARIC Accession Number: J58654
ABSTRACT: Article discusses the effects of animal-assisted therapy (AAT) on children with various disabilities. Animal-assisted therapy seeks to improve people’s health and well-being through therapeutic animal interactions. Therapy animals are trained to provide specific populations with appropriate contact with animals and to increase therapeutic gain. Led by a certified professional such as a physical therapist, occupational therapist, recreational therapist, teacher, or other certified provider, AAT requires the professional to have goals for each child. Precautions and contraindications for AAT are briefly reviewed and resources are provided for parents interested in learning more about AAT.


NARIC Accession Number: J56614
ABSTRACT: Study examined the proportion of pet owners and non-pet owners with serious mental illness, their characteristics and their motivations for owning or not owning a pet, and the relationship between pet ownership and engagement in meaningful activity and community integration. Three Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams reported on the pet ownership of all 204 of their service recipients. ACT is a service delivery model that provides community-based, individualized and multidisciplinary treatment, rehabilitation, and support to people with serious mental illnesses. Sixty clients (20 pet owners and 40 non-pet owners) completed a survey that included the Engagement of Meaningful Activities Scale. Nonparametric tests were selected for data analysis. Of 204 ACT clients, 38 (18.6 percent) were pet owners. Twenty-four (63.2 percent) of 38 responding non-pet owners desired to live with a pet. Companionship was the top motivation for pet ownership and cost was the number one reason against pet ownership. Analyses revealed significant differences between the groups in terms of diagnosis, gender, a global measure of function, meaningful activity, and psychological integration. The findings support the hypothesis that pet owners with serious mental illness living in the community demonstrate higher social community integration. Implications for future occupational therapy research and practice are discussed.

2008

(2008). *DBTAC Northwest ADA information center and Delta society present FAQs about service dogs*. NARIC Accession Number: O17406
Project Number: H133A060084
ABSTRACT: Fact sheet answers questions about the use of service dogs for people with disabilities. Additional information can be obtained from the Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center.
(DBTAC) Northwest and Delta Society. DBTAC Northwest provides technical assistance, information, and training regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act. Delta Society is a non-profit organization that offers a variety of programs to improve human health through service and therapy animals.


ABSTRACT: Article describes the use of animal assisted therapy (AAT) at a burn unit in Texas. Contact with animals can benefit patients physically, mentally, and emotionally. Methods, results, and anecdotal stories from the AAT program are discussed, as well as potential advantages and potential risks and/or disadvantages of the intervention.


ABSTRACT: This pilot study assessed the impact of service dogs and hearing dogs on the lives of recipients. Service dogs help persons with mobility impairments by retrieving items and performing other tasks. Hearing dogs alert persons with hearing impairments to environmental sounds. Researchers examined how participants who were waiting for an assistance dog currently accomplished tasks that they would expect a dog to do, as well as what tasks the dogs actually did after placement. Satisfaction and problems with the dogs were also assessed after placement. On average, dog recipients were very satisfied with their assistance dogs. Both service and hearing dog recipients reduced their dependence on other people. Service dog recipients reduced hours of paid assistance. No other significant change occurred in standardized outcome measures of physical independence, mobility and productive use of time, physical or mental health status, or satisfaction with life. More appropriate measurement instruments are needed to capture the impact of these dogs.

2007


ABSTRACT: Article provides practical information for people with disabilities who are considering using the services of assistance dogs, which are animals trained to help people with mobility impairments. One of the authors discusses her personal experiences with owning a service dog.


ABSTRACT: A hearing dog owner provides an overview of the experience of working with a hearing dog. The author describes the types of dogs used, the things they can do, the challenges and limitations of their work, the qualities of a good hearing dog, and the proper etiquette for public interactions with hearing dogs. Information is also provided on laws that protect the rights of hearing dogs and their partners as well as a list of books and online resources.


ABSTRACT: Article examines ethical issues related to the use of service dogs in a rehabilitation health care setting. Concerns about the well-being of these animals and questions regarding realistic expectations of them are addressed.

2006


ABSTRACT: This study investigated whether people with severe disabilities who use service dogs are less dependent on family and friends to carry out activities of daily living than people with similar disabilities without service dogs. Data from 76 subjects who used power wheelchairs and required assistance to transfer were included in this analysis. Of these individuals,
41 subjects used service dogs for over two years and 35 did not have service dogs. Although not to a significant degree, subjects who had service dogs used approximately 4.3 hours per week less assistance from family and friends than their counterparts. Thus, service dogs may relieve time spent by caregivers to provide personal care, allowing them the opportunity to participate in work, leisure, or more desirable activities. This paper was presented at the 2006 annual conference of the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA) and is available on CD-ROM.

Furlong, R. (2006). Training your own service dog. New Mobility, 17(159), 28-29, 31-32, 34-35, 37-41. NARIC Accession Number: J51991 ABSTRACT: Article offers advice for people with disabilities who are interested in training their own service dogs. The author speaks with people who have trained their own dogs to see how it’s done.

Macauley, B.L. (2006). Animal-assisted therapy for persons with aphasia: A pilot study. Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development (JRRD) (formerly the Bulletin of Prosthetics Research), 43(3), 357-366. NARIC Accession Number: J51492 ABSTRACT: Study evaluated the effectiveness of animal-assisted therapy for people with aphasia. In theory, the use of animal-assisted therapy in conjunction with speech therapy is used to target a desire to communicate as well as improvements in mood, decreases in loneliness, and overall a more enjoyable treatment experience. Three men with aphasia resulting from left-hemisphere strokes participated in the study. The participants received one semester of traditional therapy followed by one semester of animal-assisted therapy. Both therapies proved to be effective, though no significant differences were found in terms of test results. The results of a client-satisfaction questionnaire, however, indicated that the participants enjoyed therapy more and were more motivated during the animal-assisted therapy sessions. Implications for future research are discussed.

2005

Bergin, B. (2005). Staying independent with canine help. Diabetes Self-Management, 22(5), 30, 32-34. NARIC Accession Number: J49887 ABSTRACT: Information is provided on the training of assistance dogs. The three main types of dogs that work one-on-one with people with disabilities are service dogs, guide dogs, and hearing dogs. The breeds and personality characteristics of dogs most suitable for providing assistance to people with disabilities are describes. Tips are offered on how to bond with and care for assistance dogs.


2004


Collins, D.M., Fitzgerald, S.G., Fuhrman, S.I., & Martin, S. (2004). Effect of service dog ownership and other parameters on the number of hours of paid assistance for individuals with spinal cord injury. In D. Anson (Ed.), Proceedings of the RESNA 27th International Conference: Technology and Disability: Research, Design, Practice and Policy. Arlington, VA: RESNA Press. NARIC Accession Number: O15839 ABSTRACT: Data were collected on level of injury, time since the injury, age, ethnicity, gender, personal and household income, and service dog ownership to determine the effect of these factors on the number of hours of paid assistance for people with spinal cord injuries. Subjects who owned service dogs were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with their service dogs. Of all the factors measured, only injury
level and service dog ownership affected the number of hours of paid assistance. Higher levels of injury correlated with more hours of paid assistance. Individuals partnered with service dogs used more hours of paid assistance than those without service dogs. This paper was presented at the 2004 annual conference of RESNA, the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America and is available on CD-ROM.

2003

NARIC Accession Number: J45164
ABSTRACT: Presents an overview of the acceptance of the use of assistance dogs. Describes expanded availability of specialized products and service-dog breeding programs, including the Paws with A Cause (PAWS) program.

NARIC Accession Number: J45342
ABSTRACT: Case study evaluated the effectiveness of an animal-assisted therapy program as a method of treatment for a child with severe disabilities in a residential facility. Changes in attention span, motor skills, communication skills and compliance behaviors were examined during the therapy sessions. Details of the planning process and execution of the intervention, as well as the positive observed results are described.

NARIC Accession Number: J46585
ABSTRACT: Article reviews research and anecdotal reports that provide evidence of the benefits of using animals to help facilitate the therapy goals of patients with mental health problems. Implications for clinical practice and standards of care, specific treatment interventions, treatment planning considerations, and relevant cultural, ethical, and legal considerations are discussed.

2002

(2002). ADA business brief: Service animals. NARIC Accession Number: O17539
ABSTRACT: Publication summarizes the rules on service animals as provided under Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

NARIC Accession Number: O14527
ABSTRACT: Study examines the effect of wheelchair service dogs on the need for human assistance in completing basic and instrumental activities of daily living, as well as the number of monthly healthcare visits. Two trends were found in the analysis of the 9-month study that compared individuals with service dogs (SD) to those without service dogs (controls). First, the number of hours used for human assistance remained stable in the SD group, but increased for the control group. Second, the SD group’s need for assistance with transportation to medical appointments declined at 9 months while the control group’s need increased, although the number of appointment was twice that of the controls. This paper was presented at the 2002 annual conference of RESNA, the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society.

NARIC Accession Number: J44302
ABSTRACT: Reviews research literature concerning the benefits of trained assistance dogs, primarily service dogs for people with mobility impairments and hearing dogs for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Outcome research focusing on the impact of pet ownership on the individual’s physical health, psychological well-being, social interactions, performance of activities, and participation in community life is presented. However, due to the small number and methodological limitations of the studies reviewed, no clear conclusions are made.
2001

NARIC Accession Number: J42046
ABSTRACT: Article presenting U.S. Department of Justice answers to questions about the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) concerning service animals in places of business. Questions include: What is a service animal as defined by the ADA? How can a business operator know that an animal is a service animal and not just a pet? What must a business operator do when a customer comes to the place of business with a service animal? What if the business has always had a clearly posted “No Pets” policy? What if the county health department says that only a seeing eye dog or guide dog has to be admitted? Can a maintenance fee or cleaning fee be charged to customers who bring service animals into a place of business? Is a private taxicab prohibited from refusing to pick up a passenger with a service animal? Is the business operator responsible for the service animal while it is in the place of business? What if a service animal barks or growls at people, or otherwise acts out of control? Can a service animal be excluded if it doesn’t seem dangerous but is disruptive?

NARIC Accession Number: J43002
ABSTRACT: A qualitative study of the use of service dogs by five persons with disability using observation and interview. Service dogs are found to enhance independence and contribute to improvements in psychosocial functioning of their owners.

NARIC Accession Number: O14199
ABSTRACT: Study examining differences in psychosocial and functional outcomes between 20 wheelchair users who have received service dogs and 29 wheelchair users who have not yet received service dogs. Results indicate that service dog ownership is associated with psychosocial benefits. This paper was presented at the 2001 annual conference of RESNA, the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America.

NARIC Accession Number: J45420
ABSTRACT: Article discusses the value of the concept of subculture in disability studies. Authors categorize people who are blind, deaf, and/or have physical disabilities as a subculture within the disability community based on their common partnership with guide, hearing, and service dogs.

NARIC Accession Number: J43621
ABSTRACT: Article reviews the protocol utilized in a study that assessed the efficacy of an animal-assisted therapy program being conducted at a residential facility for children with multiple disabilities. Fourteen children received the animal-assisted therapy intervention over a 2-month period. Although analysis of the data obtained indicated a positive effect for all participants, no generalizations could be made regarding efficacy due to the many confounding factors in the study. Problems inherent in the study and recommendations for future programs are discussed.

2000

NARIC Accession Number: J41359
ABSTRACT: Study examining various aspects of service dog use, based on a 202 responses to a survey of service dog users in 40 states and Canada. Topics include the physical, emotional, social, and economic functions of service dogs, methods used to train service dog/owner teams, and problems encountered with service dogs. The survey utilized a 31-item questionnaire based on the occupational therapy literature.
ABSTRACT: Article on animal assisted therapy (AAT), also known as pet therapy. The article defines AAT, describes some examples of AAT programs, and briefly discusses the cost effectiveness of AAT programs.

1996


ABSTRACT: Study assessing the value of service dogs for people with severe ambulatory disabilities. Forty-eight individuals with severe and chronic ambulatory disabilities requiring use of wheelchairs were recruited from support and advocacy groups for muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, traumatic brain injury, and spinal cord injury. The subjects were matched on age, sex, marital status, race, and the nature and severity of disability to create 24 pairs. Members of each pair were randomly assigned either to receive a trained service dog 1 month after study entry or to a wait-list control group that received dogs in month 13 of the study. Outcome data were collected every six months over a two year period. The presence of a service dog was associated with significant positive changes both between and within groups in self-reported assessments of psychological well-being, internal locus of control, community integration, school attendance and/or part time employment, and number of paid and unpaid assistance hours. Results suggest that trained service dogs can be highly beneficial and potentially cost effective components of independent living for people with physical disabilities.

1995


ABSTRACT: Guide to guide dog schools in the United States and Canada. Part one provides an overview of issues to consider in getting a guide dog, including: what a guide dog can do, adjusting to a guide dog, costs and benefits of having a guide dog.
myths about guide dogs, common characteristics of guide dog schools, factors to consider in selecting a guide dog school, applying to a dog guide school, alternatives to a guide dog school, and commonly asked questions. Part two provides detailed descriptions of three guide dog schools in Canada and 14 in the United States. An appendix contains the name, address, and telephone numbers of all schools and a copy of the survey sent to each school.

1992

NARIC Accession Number: R06606
ABSTRACT: Discusses the role of the assistance dog in enhancing the lives of persons with disabilities. Includes an overview of the development and categories of assistance dogs and the ways in which dogs are like other types of assistive technology that improve safety, security, and independence for people with disabilities. Several teams of individuals and dogs are described to illustrate how these dogs can benefit persons with diverse needs and lifestyles. An appendix lists organizations that provide dog guides for persons with visual impairments, hearing dogs for persons with hearing impairments, and service dogs for persons with physical impairments; organizations that provide information and other guide dog related services; and specialized programs including pet partnerships and Capuchin monkey trained to assist individuals with quadriplegia.

1990

NARIC Accession Number: R05780
ABSTRACT: Booklet presents information on legal rights of people who use assistance dogs in the United States. Defines assistance dogs: guide dogs for people with visual impairments, hearing dogs for people with hearing impairments, and service dogs for people with physical disabilities. Offers information on all states regarding such dogs. All 50 states recognize guide dogs, all but Hawaii recognize hearing dogs, and 30 states recognize service dogs. Information includes whether they have laws regarding dogs, locations in which dogs are allowed, statutes regarding interference, interference inclusions, statutes regarding owner licenses and fees, licenses or fee requirements, identification requirements, statutes regarding trainers, trainers requirements, statutes regarding dogs in training, trainees allowed, penalties for interference, and summary of laws.

1982

NARIC Accession Number: J00354
ABSTRACT: Describes the history, organization, and services of the Canine Companions for Independence (CCI), founded in 1975 in Santa Rosa, California. CCI trains and certifies dogs in three categories: Social dogs which work 9 to 5 shifts in hospitals and rest homes to cheer and divert patients; Signal dogs, which provide company and ears for the deaf and hearing impaired; and Service dogs which perform tasks for their disabled owners. Includes discussion of the lengthy training program for a canine companion. Includes photographs.

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ABSTRACT: In 2007, services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act were provided to almost six million students with disabilities (Data Accountability Center, 2011). By virtue of their eligibility, these students were entitled to a “free and appropriate public education” (FAPE). To ensure that students receive FAPE, districts must follow procedures in developing an individualized education program (IEP), and the services outlined in the IEP must be carefully designed to provide educational benefit. These services include special education and related services as well as supplemental aids and services, modifications and accommodations, and supports for personnel (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act [IDEIA], 2004). Related services include developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as needed to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education. Similarly, students covered under Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990) are entitled to FAPE, which may involve the use of supplementary aids and services (and reasonable accommodations). One such support that has been the subject of recent case law is the use of service dogs, particularly for students with autism. Service dogs for students with autism serve purposes such as safety and therapeutic benefits (Modlin, 2000). Although there is still much needed research to establish the efficacy of the use of service dogs, courts have been increasingly asked to rule on the issue. The purpose of this report is to review relevant federal legislation and case law as it applies to the use of service dogs.


ABSTRACT: Autism is a neuro-developmental syndrome of constitutional origin and whose cause could also be epigenetic, and its onset is usually around first three years of birth, with empathizing deficits that result in a triad of impairments in communication, social interaction, and imagination (or presence of stereotyped behaviors), but may, on the other hand, display or hide a strong systemizing drive that accounts for a distinct triad of strengths in good attention to detail, deep narrow interests, and islets of ability. In this study, 15 children (ten boys and five girls, aged between 9 and 10 years) with high-functioning autistic disorder underwent a 12-month Dolphin Encounter for Special Children (DESC) Program conducted by the Underwater World Singapore at the Dolphin Lagoon in Sentosa. Indo-pacific humpback dolphins were used in this dolphin-assisted therapy. A pre-/post-treatment design was used to determine if the 15 subjects showed significant improvement in the reduction of their autistic symptoms after they had completed the program. The results suggested that the subjects showed a significant reduction in stereotyped behaviors and a significant improvement in communication and social interaction. With a good effect size (d), their mean AQ remained within the average range for typical individuals with autism.


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Abstract: Dolphin-assisted therapy (DAT), as a part of animal-assisted therapy and complementary and alternative medicine, yields several positive results. This study intended to add to DAT effectiveness research while using a standardized assessment. In the Ukraine, a DAT program called DolphinSwim agreed to take part in research with 37 voluntary participants. These participants were the parents of children with special needs, as defined by a variety of diagnoses, including developmental, cognitive, emotional, and physical disorders. An evaluation of five treatment programs took place during a 2-week period. The Behavior Dimensions Rating Scale was administered to program participants during pretreatment and post-treatment on site. Paired-samples t-tests indicated positive behavioral changes in children, as reported by parents. The article concludes with a discussion of the results and suggestions for future research.


ABSTRACT: This study implemented an exploratory analysis to examine how a sample of mental health professionals incorporates specific animal-assisted techniques into the therapeutic process. An extensive review of literature related to animal-assisted therapy (AAT) resulted in the identification of 18 techniques and 10 intentions for the practice of AAT in mental health. The techniques and intentions, along with demographic queries, were formulated into survey items and distributed to mental health professionals who integrate AAT into their practice. The frequency of use of the AAT techniques by survey participants (n = 31) is reported; furthermore, each of the 18 techniques is matched with the frequency of intention for use of the technique.


ABSTRACT: Positive and negative aspects of animal therapy using are discussed. Research of 30 case studies is displayed that pet therapy is a good therapeutic tool in approximately 60 percent of cases. To diagnose possible problems in families which have got a dog as a “therapist” for the child suffering from some or other form of dysontogenesis, the author suggests theoretical model of human-animal relationships. This model includes definition of heterospecific group, necessary condition of its creation and sufficient condition of its existing, types of relationships in heterospecific group, psychological phenomena arising in such group, and dynamics of heterospecific group functioning. The methods most relevant to research of heterospecific groups and correction of infringements in these groups are described. For a diagnostic basis, the following classification has been accepted: (1) infringements from the animal; and (2) infringements from the person. Correction of infringement for the purpose of restoring stability in the group is shortly described.
ABSTRACT: The odds that a school district might be asked to allow a service dog or miniature horse into one of its facilities have increased tremendously in light of new legislative changes. With those changes comes a host of fresh challenges for school administrators and policy makers—not the least of which are complex disability discrimination laws and intense media coverage. In March 2011, new regulations related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became effective, providing further guidance on dealing with requests to allow service animals in school and possibly making the presence of those animals more prevalent. In a nutshell, the ADA protects individuals with disabilities, including mental disabilities, who use service animals that are trained to perform specific tasks. That protection means schools must allow such animals in facilities, with a few limited exceptions. Further, protection is not limited to students with disabilities but extends more broadly to any individual with a disability.


ABSTRACT: Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) is a fairly new practice whose underlying principles date back to the beginning of time. Man has always found companionship in animals, but now researchers, educators and therapists are finding that by drawing on that comfort, children and adults can attack physical, mental and emotional issues. The use of animals in therapy sessions has been shown to increase communication, teach responsibility and respect, and, in the case of equine therapy, increase one’s muscle strength and development. AAT increases communication because the mere presence of an animal creates, in most people’s minds, an environment of comfort and safety, and the animal serves as a “catalyst for human communication.” This article describes how three therapy dogs from The Delta Society, an organization of AAT teams, facilitate small group sessions focused on promoting verbal skills and practicing good behaviors.

2010


ABSTRACT: Stories abound in literature of the ways that people and their pets have fostered and created valuable relationships. More recently, research has shown a strong impact from the pet relationship in health-related settings. Positive changes have been seen in people developing resilience, self-reliance, and in making progress in treatment. Children who have difficulty relating to other children and adults have been observed to behave differently with pets. This article shares how an innovative pet therapy program initiated at the ECLC of New Jersey school in Ho-Ho-Kus brought significant contribution to their students’ daily life in school. Planned to integrate pet contacts into daily school life, the three-pronged program includes pet-partner dogs’ classroom visits, a facility/service dog, which has become an essential part of the physical therapy activities, and therapeutic horseback riding. There is a level of enthusiasm and commitment to the pet therapy programs that is reinforced by many observations. Across the board, students, teachers and families cheer these many experiences.


ABSTRACT: Companion animals play various roles in people’s lives and these roles can impact on loss, grief, bereavement and mourning when the animal has been lost, whether that is through death, when missing, or when relinquished. This paper considers not only companion animal owners, but also those who own farm animals and those who work in animal service occupations. The focus is on adult clients, not children. Practical strategies are offered for the counselor who is working with a bereaved pet owner, farmer, and service provider.


ABSTRACT: Animal-Assisted programs with children are becoming increasingly popular in school and therapeutic settings. This article provides an
overview of the benefits accrued by children as well as the concerns with programs, which involve animals and therapy dogs in particular, in these environments. Research over the past 30 years indicates that therapy dogs may offer physiological, emotional, social, and physical support for children. The distinguishing features of Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) are characterized by the supplemental inclusion of a trained therapy dog in reaching an intervention goal in therapeutic environments, and as a supplement to an educational objective in school contexts. The general assumptions underlying AAT with children are that although therapy dogs are interactive, children seem to perceive them as non-judgemental participants who are outside of the complications and expectations of human relationships. This unique interaction may offer children a valuable form of social and emotional support in educational and therapeutic settings.

ERIC #: EJ893375
ABSTRACT: Female offenders’ mental health needs have consistently been shown to exceed those of male offenders. Incarcerated women report higher rates of violent victimization, major depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, mood disorders, substance use disorders, and personality disorders. For years, researchers have examined the human-animal relationship through the lens of attachment theory in order to understand the symbiosis that exists. The following article describes a pilot animal-assisted therapy program implemented at Utah State Prison for female inmates struggling with mental illness. Following this description, a clinical case example is used to illustrate the impact of this program on a particular group member.

ERIC #: ED519694
ABSTRACT: This study explored the use of animal-assisted therapy with students identified with a learning disability and limited reading success. Initially, reading progress was defined as the participants’ comprehension rate obtained from an oral Informal Reading Inventory passage. The nature of the Informal Reading Inventory requires the introduction of more difficult reading passages as the student’s comprehension rate increases, potentially masking the overall effect of the intervention. Due to this factor and erratic student performance, which is a common characteristic of students with learning disabilities, obtaining consistent comprehension rates was difficult. Therefore, progress was defined only as total amount of time the student was engaged in reading under each condition. A reversal replication, single case design was implemented to determine the effects of reading to the therapy dog on the students’ reading progress as measured by total amount of time read. The analysis indicated a statistically significant increase in the total amount of reading time as determined by the participants in the presence of the therapy dog. Positive student feedback about their experience reading with the therapy dog supported the effect of the intervention on reading progress.

ERIC #: EJ890068
ABSTRACT: In this article, the author shares how the two service dogs from Canine Assistants helped her realize her goal for her seven-year-old identical twin boys with cerebral palsy to be safer and independent. Connor’s dog, Nadia, is a Black Labrador/Golden Retriever mix. Chase’s dog, Oakley, is a Standard Poodle/Golden Retriever mix. Nadia pushes Connor to run safely and is there when he falls. Oakley is a “steady” for Chase. They are training Oakley to allow Chase to pull to stand on him, and then walk with the dog on one side, and his cane on the other. The dogs know many basic and advanced commands. If the boys had it their way, the dogs would be running all over cleaning up their clothes and toys. As a single parent, she is relieved her boys have each other and their dogs when she’s not around. Her twins have received another best friend, increased self-esteem, and people now see past the disability of glasses, braces, and a walker, and see a child and his dog.

ERIC #: ED520036
ABSTRACT: While animal assisted therapy (AAT) has been a successful part of treatment plans within the medical field for several decades, AAT has not been quantitatively researched as a viable instructional tool that can be used in conjunction with other reading intervention strategies. With over one-third of elementary school aged children experiencing reading difficulties, new instructional strategies must be researched to address this educational deficiency. This pilot study aimed to determine the impact of AAT reading instruction on reading performance, within a sample of 26 homeschooled students in grade 3, so as to lay the foundation for broader studies in this critical area. An experimental pre-test/post test control group research design was utilized for this pilot study. The effect of AAT on reading performance was measured by the results collected from participant pre-test and post-test scores of the Gray Oral Reading Test 4th edition (GORT-4) in the areas of reading rate and overall reading quotient. Two-sample t-test statistical analysis of experimental and control group pre/post test scores from the GORT-4 in the areas of reading rate and overall reading quotient was completed. The two-tailed two-sample t-test score $t(24) = 2.56$, $p = 0.017$ confirmed that AAT oral reading instruction significantly impacted student reading rate. Due to the small size of this pilot study, the analysis lacked sufficient power, thus limiting these findings to this study. However, this research prepares the foundation for future larger studies that can explore the instructional and therapeutic effectiveness of AAT in addressing student reading ability, and student issues such as motivation, self-esteem, and emotional state.


ABSTRACT: This study evaluated the effects of therapeutic horseback riding on social functioning in children with autism. We hypothesized that participants in the experimental condition ($n=19$), compared to those on the wait-list control ($n=15$), would demonstrate significant improvement in social functioning following a 12-weeks horseback riding intervention. Autistic children exposed to therapeutic horseback riding exhibited greater sensory seeking, sensory sensitivity, social motivation, and less inattention, distractibility, and sedentary behaviors. The results provide evidence that therapeutic horseback riding may be a viable therapeutic option in treating children with autism spectrum disorders.


ABSTRACT: Many people are familiar with service animals, or as most people call them, “seeing eye dogs.” Many, however, are not as familiar with another extremely beneficial service animal, the companion dog. This article relates the story of Sean, a boy with cerebral palsy, and his companion dog, Percy, and describes how the use of service animals can be beneficial to people with disabilities.

Jenkins, C.D. (2009). Exploring the impact of an animal assisted therapy dog upon the emotional, educational, and social actualization of middle school students receiving counseling services. ProQuest LLC, Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Toledo. ERIC #: ED513049

ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study was to examine animal assisted therapy (AAT) in the school setting. This study reviewed the potential social, emotional, and educational benefits that children and adolescents may gain from utilizing an animal assisted therapy dog. This study utilized The Relationship Inventory and The AAT Student Survey to further investigate these results. The sample for this study was the 4th-8th grade classes at a medium rural Midwestern middle school. These students have been using an animal assistance therapy dog for the past three years. The findings of this study suggest that no differences exist between students who utilize and do not utilize individual and/or group counseling with an AAT dog in the school setting and how they rate the AAT dog on Rogers’ core conditions. The findings also suggest that students who rate the AAT dog higher on Rogers’ core conditions may not self-report higher levels of self-actualization than students who rate the AAT dog lower on these same core conditions.

ABSTRACT: This study investigated the demographics and perceptions of participants who utilize animals in academic programs, specifically the volunteers who use dogs to work with at-risk children in reading programs. It presented an argument for incorporating research-supported elements of reading tutor skills into the volunteer tutor training for the Reading Education Assistance Dogs [R] (R.E.A.D.) program as a foundation for animal-assisted therapy. The descriptive study made use of an electronic survey to collect the quantitative data. The survey was distributed to the members of the R.E.A.D. program by the Intermountain Therapy Animals organization. Participants were asked to provide information regarding their background, employment status, profession, training, and their reason for offering their volunteer service. They were also asked about the nature of their program, how many children they tutored during the 2007-2008 school year, and the total number of hours spent tutoring during that timeframe. They identified the animal assisted activity and animal assisted therapy groups that they belonged to, as well as the city and state where that group was located. They were asked to describe the location, length and duration of the tutoring sessions, and to rate the level of program support offered by the staff at the host locations. They were also asked how much time they spent studying for the R.E.A.D. test, and how they acquired that training. They were asked specifically about their reason for volunteering. Most importantly, they were asked if they felt the current training was sufficient to conduct effective reading sessions, and they were asked to respond to suggestions for additional training on literacy strategies. Finally, they were asked for their perceptions of the participating children’s beginning and concluding states of fluency and motivation. The survey also collected narrative comments on using animal assisted activities and animal assisted therapy in academic reading programs. The quantitative data show that the volunteers felt the current level of training was overwhelmingly supportive of their program. While the majority of the volunteers did not have a background in education or with prior tutoring experience, they specifically participated in the R.E.A.D. program to help children with literacy. The study also uncovered that the volunteers practiced many tutoring activities in the content of the reading program, and were able to identify these activities when provided with a listing of the activities using professional reading terminology. The majority of the participating volunteers were satisfied with the current level of training, and over half of them were also interested in receiving more explicit information on other literacy tutoring strategies. The conclusion of the study suggested that the value of this additional instruction to the volunteer R.E.A.D. facilitators would be realized in the form of improved knowledge regarding the use of reading skills and strategies within a tutoring session. But, it would be left up to the volunteer’s discretion as to whether the skills and strategies are implemented during the reading session. The results of the study also indicated that this would only be effective if it were offered as optional supplemental knowledge to the present training material. Finally, they indicated a positive response to the questions about perceived gains in fluency and motivation of the participating children. However, due to the descriptive nature of the study, no causal inferences were drawn.

ERIC #: EJ795353
ABSTRACT: More than 400 children with a physical and/or mental challenge visit the Curacao Dolphin Therapy and Research Center (CDTC) for dolphin-assisted therapy every year. Dolphin therapy appears to be the right approach for many children. With the help of these special and very social animals, it is easier to make contact with the children. It motivates children to learn new things in a playful way. At CDTC, a team of professional therapists, in shorts and T-shirts, treat the children according to the principles of behavioral therapy and operant conditioning, which involves rewarding positive/wanted behavior. The children participate in a two-week program, with two hours of therapy each day. After hard work with their personal speech therapist, physical therapist, or psychologist, they enjoy swimming with their dolphin in the Caribbean seawater. The children discover that the prior exercises they participated in during speech therapy or the coordination skills they worked on in physical therapy suddenly have meaning, because
they improved their ability to play and interact with the dolphins. The fun and relaxation that swimming with the dolphins offers them motivates the child to work towards the next step. The results are stunning, and parents are very enthusiastic about the program. This article is the fourth of a 12-part series which explores the benefits of aquatics therapy and recreation for people with special needs.

2007


ABSTRACT: Little evidence-based research has been published within the field of communication disorders on the role of dogs as catalysts for human communication. This single participant study, a point of entry into this realm of research, explores the effects of a therapy dog on the communication skills of a patient with aphasia receiving intensive speech and language therapy within a rehabilitation setting. The researchers conclude that the presence of the dog does have the potential to stimulate both overt social-verbal and social-nonverbal communication. Learning outcomes: As a result of this activity the reader will be able to (1) describe the beneficial role of dogs to serve as catalysts for human communication (2) describe ways in which a person with aphasia may be assisted by a therapy dog and (3) become familiar with an animal-assisted therapy (AAT) program set-up for patients with communication disorders within a rehabilitation setting.

2006


ABSTRACT: Some students with disabilities find that skilled companion dogs can help them achieve their goals, but schools do not always welcome the animals. Legal experts say that the law is generally on the side of people with disabilities who require assistance animals, but that the issues can become more complicated in the public schools. Guidelines ask principals to consider issues such as allergies, students’ fears, and cleanliness. Disputes involving animals and children tend to draw a lot of media attention. Board Buzz, a Web log run by the National School Boards Association, devoted a 2004 posting to a Kentucky superintendent who was criticized nationwide when he refused to let a student bring a Wiemariner to class until he could resolve safety and legal concerns. The dog had been trained to tell when the child was about to have a seizure. A case in Stafford, Virginia, where parents asked their local school district to allow their disabled daughter to have her trained assistance dog accompany her to her middle school speech class last school year set off a flurry of media coverage and raised a larger question. How far must schools go to balance the needs of students with disabilities against the needs of other students and school employees? Lawyers for the school district pointed to a 1991 guidance letter from the federal Education Department that they say bolsters the district’s view that service animals do not have to be allowed unless not letting the animal accompany a student with a disability would deny the student the opportunity to participate in or benefit from the school’s program.

2005


ABSTRACT: If correctional education aims to transform individuals and bring about change, we need to consider the whole person who comes with human needs, emotions and attitudes. In order to expand our approach, alternative programs should be explored. A somewhat unusual but very promising approach to address offenders’ human needs is the use of animals in institutions. The majority of these programs have a vocational skills component: Inmates train dogs to become service dogs for the disabled, or they work with horses, either wild mustangs or retired race horses in need of rehabilitation. Although vocational training is certainly a major consideration, these programs are also highly therapeutic and rehabilitative. Suggested outcomes can benefit many: The inmate, the institution, other agencies, and the community. The purpose of this article is to raise awareness of selected animal-assisted programs in correctional institutions and their reported benefits.
ABSTRACT: Successful social work practice requires orientation to diverse social and cultural characteristics which structure the framework for our communities and families. This paper explores the necessity of incorporating the connection between people and non-human relationships in our understanding of social support systems. Specifically, we examine our relationships with animals in the understanding of these social networks and in turn, the readiness of social work education to support this valuable and prominent feature of the modern family system. In addition, this paper will highlight the congruence between the study of the human-animal bond and the social work curriculum.

Kaymen, M.S. (2005). *Exploring animal-assisted therapy as a reading intervention strategy.* ERIC #: ED490729
ABSTRACT: This study is an examination of animal-assisted therapy in an attempt to explore the ways it may serve as reading intervention program for struggling readers. Due to the low rate of literacy in the U.S., children are often put into reading intervention programs where they are required to read to an adult; potentially creating anxiety that may act as a deterrent to reading regularly, and thus contributing to the condition of aliteracy, that is, possessing the basic skills to read yet having no desire to do so. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the ways in which remedial readers respond to the activity of reading aloud to a dog at the resource reading lab at a suburban, public, elementary school in Northern California. Through observations, interviews and surveys, the feelings, perceptions and beliefs of four students and their parents, and the two literacy assistants at the research site are determined. Appendixes include: non-participant observation conducted; semi-structured audio-taped interviews; and questionnaires given to participating families.

ABSTRACT: Animal Assisted Therapy and Activities have become well established in traditional physiological and psychological medicine in North America. While positive animal interaction is nothing new (Egyptian, Greek, Roman, many eastern and western cultures), the beneficial calming effects of therapy have only been well documented in the medical literature in the last 50 years. Animals have become common as hospital visitors and resident animals for treatment centers for children with special needs and of emotionally disturbed children. In this article, the author presents some of the reasons why animal therapy is beneficial for children with pervasive developmental disorders. He also discusses some of the concerns of parents about the potential risks related to animal ownership.

2004

ABSTRACT: Trained therapy dogs are becoming an increasingly common sight in many educational and health care settings. This article, coauthored by a college professor, a Therapy Dogs International, Inc., Evaluator and local program director, and a registered nurse reviews the research on using registered therapy dogs as adjuncts in school programs and health care treatment plans for children ages 5-8. It addresses to the most commonly raised objections to allowing dogs in classrooms and patient rooms and offers practical guidelines for maximizing the positive outcomes of animal-assisted activities and therapy.

2001

ABSTRACT: The integration of animal-assisted therapy into clinical psychology is a growing phe-
nomenon. These “co-therapists” may be of assistance to counselors when working with withdrawn and non-communicative counselees. The presence of an animal has been found to lower anxiety and motivate the counselee’s participation in therapy. Animal-assisted therapy (AAT) is not considered a style of therapy, but helps build trust between the counselee and counselor. Some common mental health treatment goals associated with AAT are to improve socialization and communication; reduce isolation, boredom, and loneliness; help with affect; lessen depression; and provide affection. School settings are appropriate for integrating AAT and such programs may have a role in helping curb school violence.

1997


ERIC #: EJ553474

ABSTRACT: Discusses how animals can often succeed in reaching troubled children and youth where adults have failed. Identifies two major categories of animal interaction which are used in educational and therapeutic interventions, describes why they are successful, and provides basic do’s and don’ts for establishing a therapeutic animal program.

1994


ERIC #: ED373462


Abstract: This resource guide presents information on a variety of ways that animals can be used as a therapeutic modality with people having disabilities. Aspects addressed include: pet ownership and selection criteria; dogs (including service dogs, hearing/signal dogs, seeing leader dogs, and social/specialty dogs); horseriding for both therapy and fun; and monkeys to provide companionship and independence. Contact information and a brief description of services are provided for 12 organizations which specialize in training animals for use by people with disabilities.
people with disabilities. There are many anecdotal publications extolling the benefits of working with service dogs, but few rigorous studies exist to provide the evidence of the usefulness of this type of assistive technology option. This systematic review evaluates the published research that supports the use of service dogs for people with mobility-related physical disabilities. Articles were identified by computerized search of PubMed, CINAHL, PsycINFO, OT Seeker, the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, SportDiscus, Education Research Complete, Public Administration Abstracts, Web of Knowledge and Academic Search Premier databases with no date range specified. The keywords used in the search included disabled persons, assistance dogs or service dogs and mobility impairments. The reference lists of the research papers were checked as was the personal citation database of the lead author. Twelve studies met the inclusion criteria and whereas the findings are promising, they are inconclusive and limited because of the level of evidence, which included one Level I, six Level III, four Level IV and one Level V. All of the studies reviewed had research design quality concerns including small participant sizes, poor descriptions of the interventions, outcome measures with minimal psychometrics and lack of power calculations. Findings indicated three major themes including social/participation, functional and psychological outcomes; all of which are areas in the occupational therapy scope of practice. Occupational therapists may play a critical role in referral, assessment, assisting clients and consulting with training organizations before, during and after the service dog placement process. In order for health care professionals to have confidence in recommending this type of assistive technology, the evidence to support such decisions must be strengthened.

Higgins, J.W., Murray, H., Rhodes, R.E., Temple, V.A., & Tuokko, H. (2012). Pilot study of a dog walking randomized intervention: Effects of a focus on canine exercise. Preventive Medicine, 54(5), 309-312. ABSTRACT: Objective: The promotion of dog walking among owners who do not walk their dogs regularly may be a viable physical activity intervention approach, yet research is very limited and no intervention studies have employed control groups. Therefore, the purpose of this pilot study was to examine the viability of dog walking for physical activity intervention using messages targeting canine exercise. Method: Inactive dog owners (n = 58) were randomized to either a standard control condition or the intervention (persuasive material about canine health from walking and a calendar to mark walks) after completing a baseline questionnaire package and wearing a pedometer for one week. Participants (standard condition n = 28; intervention condition n = 30) completed the six and 12 week follow-up questionnaire packages. Results: Intention to treat analyses showed that both groups increased physical activity significantly across the 12 weeks (η² = 0.09 to 0.21). The intervention group resulted in significantly higher step-counts compared to the control group (Δ1823 steps) and showed significantly higher trajectories from baseline to 12 weeks in the self-reported physical activity measures (η² = 0.11 to 0.27). Conclusion: The results are promising for the viability of increasing dog walking as a means for physical activity promotion and suggest that theoretical fidelity targeting canine exercise may be a helpful approach.

2011

Berget, B., Braastad, B.O., Ekeberg, O., & Pedersen, I. (2011). Animal-assisted therapy with farm animals for persons with psychiatric disorders: Effects on anxiety and depression, a randomized controlled trial. Occupational Therapy in Mental Health, 27(1), 50-64. ABSTRACT: This study examined the effects of animal-assisted therapy with farm animals during a 12 week intervention on anxiety and depression among psychiatric patients by using a randomized controlled trial with a follow-up investigation at six months. Ninety adult patients were included, with 41 completers in the treatment group and 28 in the control group. Anxiety measured using Spielberger State Anxiety Inventory did not decrease significantly during the intervention for the treatment group but was significantly lower at follow-up compared with baseline (p = 0.002) and with the end of the intervention (p = 0.004). There was no significant change for the control group. Depression measured using Beck Depression Inventory was significantly lower at follow-up compared with baseline for both groups, but there were no significant differences between the groups.
2010

*No abstract is available.*


ABSTRACT: With a soaring trend of the incorporation of complementary therapies into the mainstream of health care, animal-facilitated therapy has become a popular interest for the health care team to integrate into a patient’s plan of care. This systematic literature summarizes the current research on the use of animal therapy in several patient populations and provides nursing implications for practice.

2009


ABSTRACT: The aim of this study was to evaluate the effects of animal-assisted activity on self-esteem, control over activities of daily living, and other psycho-physiological aspects among Taiwanese inpatients with schizophrenia. Thirty participants were randomly assigned to either the treatment or control group. A weekly animal-assisted activity program was arranged for patients in the treatment group for two months. A questionnaire assessing self-esteem (Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale; GSE), coping ability (Coping Strategies Scale), and quality of life (Quality of Life Scale; QOLS-N) was completed before, at the end of intervention, and at six months follow-up. Two-thirds of the patients (N = 60) were given interventions; the remaining served as controls. RESULTS: There was significant increase in self-efficacy in the treatment group but not in the control group from before intervention (SB) to six months follow-up (SSMA), (SSMA-SB; F1,55 = 4.20, p = 0.05) and from end of intervention (SA) to follow-up (SSMA-SA; F1,55 = 5.6, p = 0.02). There was significant increase in coping ability within the treatment group between before intervention and follow-up (SSMA-SB = 2.7, t = 2.31, p = 0.03), whereas no changes in quality of life was found. There were no significant changes in any of the variables during the intervention. Conclusion: AAT with farm animals may have positive influences on self-efficacy and coping ability among psychiatric patients with long lasting psychiatric symptoms.

2008


ABSTRACT: Background: The benefits of Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) for humans with mental disorders have been well-documented using cats and dogs, but there is a complete lack of controlled studies using farm animals as therapeutic agents for psychiatric patients. The study was developed in the context of Green care, a concept that involves the use of farm animals, plants, gardens, or the landscape in recreational or work-related interventions for different target groups of clients in cooperation with health authorities. The present study aimed at examining effects of a 12-week intervention with farm animals on self-efficacy, coping ability and quality of life among adult psychiatric patients with a variety of psychiatric diagnoses. Methods: The study was a randomized controlled trial and follow-up. Ninety patients (59 women and 31 men) with schizophrenia, affective disorders, anxiety, and personality disorders completed questionnaires to assess self-efficacy (Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale; GSE), coping ability (Coping Strategies Scale), and quality of life (Quality of Life Scale; QOLS-N) before, at the end of intervention, and at six months follow-up. Two-thirds of the patients (N = 60) were given interventions; the remaining served as controls. RESULTS: There was significant increase in self-efficacy in the treatment group but not in the control group from before intervention (SB) to six months follow-up (SSMA), (SSMA-SB; F1,55 = 4.20, p = 0.05) and from end of intervention (SA) to follow-up (SSMA-SA; F1,55 = 5.6, p = 0.02). There was significant increase in coping ability within the treatment group between before intervention and follow-up (SSMA-SB = 2.7, t = 2.31, p = 0.03), whereas no changes in quality of life was found. There were no significant changes in any of the variables during the intervention. Conclusion: AAT with farm animals may have positive influences on self-efficacy and coping ability among psychiatric patients with long lasting psychiatric symptoms.

ABSTRACT: Purpose/Objectives: To identify to what extent an animal-assisted activity (i.e., visits with a dog) affects the mood, self-perceived health, and sense of coherence among patients undergoing radiation therapy. Design: Pretest/post-test between and within groups. Setting: Radiation oncology units of two hospitals in a mid-sized, midwestern city. Sample: 30 adult patients undergoing nonpalliative radiation therapy. Methods: After giving informed consent, participants were randomly assigned to receive 12 dog visits, 12 human visits, or 12 quiet reading sessions over a four-week period. Findings: No statistically significant differences were found; however, compared with others their age, patients receiving dog visits viewed their health as improved over the four-week period. Participants described each of the three activities as beneficial. The study is primarily useful as a basis for planning additional research. Conclusions: The study warrants replication with a larger sample to determine applicability of animal-assisted activity in patients with cancer who are undergoing radiation therapy. Implications for Nursing: Patients may want and express benefit from animal-assisted activity dog visits, but the outcomes of the visits may not be measureable. Nurses should assess to what extent patients believe that such visits are beneficial by asking them. The visits may be valued by patients as helping to relieve their anxiety and as distractions from their disease and therapy.

2002


ABSTRACT: Background: Animal-assisted therapy (AAT) is claimed to have a variety of benefits, but almost all published results are anecdotal. We characterized the resident population in long-term care facilities desiring AAT and determined whether AAT can objectively improve loneliness. Methods: Of 62 residents, 45 met inclusion criteria for the study. These 45 residents were administered the Demographic and Pet History Questionnaire (DPHQ) and Version 3 of the UCLA Loneliness Scale (UCLA-LS). They were then randomized into three groups (no AAT; AAT once/week; AAT three times/week; n = 15/group) and retested with the UCLA-LS near the end of the 6-week study. Results: Use of the DPHQ showed residents volunteering for the study had a strong life-history of emotional intimacy with pets and wished that they currently had a pet. AAT was shown by analysis of covariance followed by pairwise comparison to have significantly reduced loneliness scores in comparison with the no AAT group. Conclusions: The desire for AAT strongly correlates with previous pet ownership. AAT reduces loneliness in residents of long-term care facilities.

2001


ABSTRACT: Animal-assisted therapy (AAT) has been used as a therapeutic tool in various psychiatric populations, but there have been no published studies with elderly schizophrenic patients. The authors evaluated, in a blinded, controlled manner, the effects of AAT in a closed psychogeriatric ward over 12 months. Subjects were ten elderly schizophrenic patients and ten matched patients (mean age: 79.1±6.7 years). The outcome measure was the Scale for Social Adaptive Functioning Evaluation (SAFE). AAT was conducted in weekly four-hour sessions. Treatment encouraged mobility, interpersonal contact, and communication and reinforced activities of daily living (ADLs), including personal hygiene and independent self-care, through the use of cats and dogs as “modeling companions.” The SAFE scores at termination showed significant improvement compared with baseline scores and were significantly more positive for the AAT group on both Total SAFE score and on the Social Functions subscale. AAT proved a successful tool for enhancing socialization, ADLs, and general well-being.

ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of toy versus live cat stimuli on the verbal communication of elderly nursing home residents with dementia. The subjects’ verbal communication was analyzed for total number of words, meaningful information units, and initiations. The measurements were recorded in three conditions: without stimuli, in the presence of two toy cats, and in the presence of two live cats. Six female nursing home residents with moderate dementia were randomly assigned into two groups to counterbalance the order of the conditions. The results indicated that live cats had the greatest influence on average subject performance across all three measurements.

1996


ABSTRACT: Objective: The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effects of pet therapy on geriatric psychiatry inpatients. A demonstrable impact could lead to more widespread or targeted use of animal companionship programs for hospitalized older persons. Method: The study design was a randomized parallel-group control treatment trial with pretreatment and post-treatment measures. Fifty-eight subjects with chronic age-related disabilities who were patients of the Wills Eye Hospital Geriatric Psychiatry Unit were assigned to a pet therapy intervention group or an exercise control group for one hour a day for five consecutive days. Every subject was blindly evaluated with the Multidimensional Observation Scale for Elderly Subjects (MOSES) before and after the intervention week. Results: No significant differences in MOSES scores were found between or within groups before and after the interventions. There was a non-significant tendency for subjects who received the pet intervention to have less irritable behavior after treatment. However, women with dementia who received either pet therapy or exercise intervention had improved irritable behavior scores after treatment. Conclusion: This pilot study demonstrates the need for further research on animal-assisted interventions with hospitalized elderly persons. Differential improvement in women with dementia also requires further investigation.

Documents from the National Library of Medicine PubMed search at www.pubmed.com are listed below:

2013


PMID: 23170993

ABSTRACT: OBJECTIVES: Animal-assisted therapy using dogs trained to be calm and provide comfort to strangers has been used as a complementary therapy for a range of medical conditions. This study was designed to evaluate the effects of brief therapy dog visits for fibromyalgia patients attending a tertiary outpatient pain management facility compared with time spent in a waiting room. DESIGN: Open label with waiting room control. SETTING: Tertiary care, university-based, outpatient pain management clinic. SUBJECTS: A convenience sample of fibromyalgia patients was obtained through advertisements posted in the clinic. INTERVENTIONS: Participants were able to spend clinic waiting time with a certified therapy dog instead of waiting in the outpatient waiting area. When the therapy dog was not available, individuals remained in the waiting area. OUTCOME MEASURES: Self-reported pain, fatigue, and emotional distress were recorded using 11-point numeric rating scales before and after the therapy dog visit or waiting room time. RESULTS: Data were evaluated from 106 therapy dog visits and 49 waiting room controls, with no significant between-group demographic differences in participants. Average intervention duration was 12 minutes for the therapy dog visit and 17 minutes for the waiting room control. Significant im-
provements were reported for pain, mood, and other measures of distress among patients after the therapy dog visit, but not the waiting room control. Clinically meaningful pain relief (≥2 points pain severity reduction) occurred in 34 percent after the therapy dog visit and 4 percent in the waiting room control. Outcome was not affected by the presence of comorbid anxiety or depression. CONCLUSIONS: Brief therapy dog visits may provide a valuable complementary therapy for fibromyalgia outpatients.

PMID: 23392285
ABSTRACT: Ranger, the cardiac Pet Therapy standard poodle, was called upon by a family member to visit Mrs. M, a patient hospitalized for worsening heart failure. Although short of breath, Mrs. M started talking to Ranger as he rested quietly on the bed beside her. She told him in a soft voice that she knew she was sick but “you, my friend, give me strength and courage.” Mrs. M died one week later. Soon after, the family stated in a survey that the interaction between Mrs. M and Ranger was very important to Mrs. M and that she had looked forward to her visits with Ranger. Mrs. M indicated to her family that Ranger made her feel calm and protected as she faced her illness.

2012

PMID: 22942937
ABSTRACT: This study examined acceptance by staff and patients of a therapy dog (TD) in the emergency department (ED). METHODS: Immediately after TD visits to a University Hospital ED, all available ED staff, patients, and their visitors were invited to complete a survey. RESULTS: Of 125 “patient” and 105 staff responses, most were favorable. Ninety-three percent of patients and 95 percent of staff agreed that TDs should visit EDs; 87.8 percent of patients and 92 percent of staff approved of TDs for both adult and pediatric patients. Fewer than 5 percent of either patients or staff were afraid of the TDs. Fewer than 10 percent of patients and staff thought the TDs posed a sanitary risk or interfered with staff work. CONCLUSION: Both patients and staff approve of TDs in an ED. The benefits of animal-assisted therapy should be further explored in the ED setting.

PMID: 22388686
ABSTRACT: Dog Tags is an animal-assisted therapy offered by the Washington Humane Society (WHS) in partnership with the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC). The program is open to all ranks of enlisted service members using WRNMMC services. Dog Tags is a 3-tiered certificate program allowing Soldiers, recovering at WRNMMC, to learn and apply progressively complex and challenging elements of canine positive reinforcement training to dogs awaiting adoption at the WHS. Although each tier is a self-contained and complete curriculum, subsequent tiers build on the skills and knowledge acquired in the previous one(s). Dog Tags Warrior/trainers work with fully-screened (health and temperament) shelter dogs to provide these dogs with mental stimulation, environmental enrichment, and socialization that are vital to their successful adoption and integration into new homes. The Soldiers also benefit because they develop new skills, build positive bonds with the dogs, and continue to serve their community.

PMID: 22994611
ABSTRACT: AIM: An ever increasing interest in the therapeutic aspects of the human-animal bond has led to a proliferation of animal-assisted interventions (AAI) involving dogs. However, most of these programs lack a solid methodological structure, and basic evaluative research is needed. The purpose of this study was to test the value of dog-assisted interventions as an innovative tool to increase quality of life in the geriatric population. METHODS: Nineteen patients (men and women) with a mean age of 85 years participated in the study. Interactions between
patients and visiting dogs occurred either in a social situation (socialization sessions) or in a therapeutic context (physical therapy sessions). We derived and characterized a specific ethogram of elderly-dog interactions aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of visiting dogs in improving mood, catalyzing social interactions and reducing their everyday apathetic state. Cortisol levels were also measured in the saliva, and depressive state was evaluated. RESULTS: Overall, results show a time-dependent increase in social behavior and spontaneous interactions with the dogs. Dog-mediated interactions affected the daily increase in cortisol levels, thus having an ‘activational effect’, in contrast to the apathetic state of institutionalized elderly. CONCLUSIONS: Dog-mediated intervention programs appear to be promising tools to improve the social skills and enrich the daily activities of the institutionalized elderly.

No abstract is available.

ABSTRACT: Animal assisted therapy is a known preventive and interventive method which is held by the contribution of specially trained animals and professionals. One of its main indication fields is psychiatry. The purpose of this summary is to give an overview on the animal assisted therapy’s background, possible uses and effectiveness with literature. It looks for the answer if this therapeutic method can be used for effectively easing the symptoms of specific psychiatric diseases and on which fields can it be used most effectively. Due to the data provided by literature it can be determined that the therapy supported by animals is able to give an effective help on the fields of various psychiatric supports, preventions, interventions and rehabilitations regardless of the age. It is mostly used in the case of depression, anxiety, addiction, schizophrenia, and autism spectrum disorder. Aside from these it could also be used effectively in the rehabilitation of victims of sexual abuse especially in the case of children.

It can also play a role in the re-socialization of in adapted adolescences and adults, even with farm therapy. Due to experiences the therapies supported by animals are effective on the following fields: improving social and communication skills, easing anxiety, improving mood, helping independent living, improving emphatic skills.

ABSTRACT: Research has examined the physiological and psychosocial impact of animal-assisted activities (AAA) and animal-assisted therapy (AAT). The current review article summarizes the benefits of AAA and AAT for hospitalized patients with medical disorders, psychiatric patients, and residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities. The literature regarding inclusion of animals in business and organizational settings is also reviewed. Although there is clear evidence of improved physical and psychological health from AAA and AAT in the civilian population, there is a dearth of published findings of the evaluation of such benefits for military personnel.

ABSTRACT: BACKGROUND: Interaction programs involving dolphins and patients with various pathologies or developmental disorders (e.g., cerebral palsy, intellectual impairment, autism, atopic dermatitis, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression) have stimulated interest in their beneficial effects and therapeutic potential. However, the true effects observed in different clinical and psycho-educational setups are still controversial. RESULTS: An evaluation protocol consisting of the Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS), Psychoeducational Profile-Revised (PEP-R), Autism Treatment Evaluation Checklist (ATEC), Theory of Mind Tasks (ToM Tasks) and a custom-made Interaction Evaluation Grid (IEG) to evaluate behavioural complexity during in-pool in-
teractions was applied to 10 children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders. The ATEC, ToM Tasks and CARS results show no benefits of the dolphin interaction program. Interestingly, the PEP-R suggests some statistically significant effects on ‘Overall development score’, as well as on their ‘Fine motor development’, ‘Cognitive performance’ and ‘Cognitive verbal development’. Also, a significant evolution in behavioural complexity was shown by the IEG. CONCLUSIONS: This study does not support significant developmental progress resulting from the dolphin interaction program.


**ABSTRACT:** Animal-assisted therapy (AAT) has gained much attention in civilian and military health care. Evidence supports its benefits with varied populations with diseases and disabilities, but no research has been done with injured or ill service members. This pretest, posttest nonrandomized control group study evaluated the effects of AAT on Warriors in transition (N=24) attending an Occupational Therapy Life Skills program with the long-term goal of improving their successful reintegration. Although significant differences were not found between the groups on most measures, anecdotal reports by participants and observers indicate that participants eagerly anticipated being with the therapy dogs, expressed pleasure and satisfaction with the experience, and regretted seeing it end. There were significant correlations between mood, stress, resilience, fatigue, and function at various measurement points. This is the first study to formally assess the benefits of AAT with wounded service members in garrison. Suggestions for future research are provided.


**ABSTRACT:** OBJECTIVE: The objective of this study was to evaluate the effects of brief therapy dog visits to an outpatient pain management facility compared with time spent in a waiting room. DESIGN: The design of this study is open-label. Setting: This study was conducted in a university tertiary care adult chronic pain outpatient clinic. SUBJECTS:

The subjects of this study include outpatients, adults accompanying outpatients to their appointments, and clinic staff. Intervention: Participants were able to spend clinic waiting time with a certified therapy dog instead of waiting in the outpatient waiting area. When the therapy dog was not available, individuals remained in the waiting area. OUTCOME MEASURES: Self-reported pain, fatigue, and emotional distress were recorded using 11-point numeric rating scales before and after the therapy dog visit or waiting room time. RESULTS: Two hundred ninety-five therapy dog visits (235 with patients, 34 family/friends, and 26 staff) and 96 waiting room surveys (83 from patients, 6 family/friends, and 7 staff) were completed over a 2-month study period. Significant improvements were reported for pain, mood, and other measures of distress among patients after the therapy dog visit but not the waiting room control, with clinically meaningful pain relief (decrease ≥2 points) in 23 percent after the therapy dog visit and 4 percent in the waiting room control. Significant improvements were likewise seen after therapy dog visits for family/friends and staff. CONCLUSIONS: Therapy dog visits in an outpatient setting can provide significant reduction in pain and emotional distress for chronic pain patients. Therapy dog visits can also significantly improve emotional distress and feelings of well-being in family and friends accompanying patients to appointments and clinic staff.


**PMID:** 22512055

No abstract is available.


**PMID:** 22388684

No abstract is available.


**PMID:** 22950145

**ABSTRACT:** The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) amends its regulations concerning veterans in need of service dogs. Under this final rule, VA will provide to veterans with visual, hearing, or mobility impairments benefits to support the use of a service dog as part of the management of such impairments.
The benefits include assistance with veterinary care, travel benefits associated with obtaining and training a dog, and the provision, maintenance, and replacement of hardware required for the dog to perform the tasks necessary to assist such veterans.


**ABSTRACT:** The first pair of US Army animal-assisted therapy (AAT) dogs deployed to Iraq in December 2007 with the 85th Medical Detachment Combat and Operational Stress Control unit. As of this writing, six dogs have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, offering Soldiers a small reminder of home. Army occupational therapists led the way in this endeavor as primary handlers; the path has been rocky but ultimately rewarding. This article depicts how occupational therapists used AAT and animal-assisted activities to help Soldiers cope with the stressors of living in a deployed environment. Challenges and lessons-learned, including anecdotal examples, are discussed.


No abstract is available.


No abstract is available.


**ABSTRACT:** Combat and operational stress control (COSC) dogs represent a new category of military working dog. America’s VetDogs, a nongovernmental, not-for-profit organization, trains and provides therapy dogs to work with the US Army's combat and operational stress control teams deployed to Afghanistan or Iraq. By taking the therapy/service dog concept to the next level, these dogs have become an important modality in the Army’s initiative to safeguard Soldiers’ behavioral health while deployed, allowing COSC unit members to break down stigmas that are still present when dealing with behavioral health issues. The training process begins by choosing a pool of dogs, exposing them to different sensory experiences over several months, and training the primary and secondary handlers who will be responsible for the dogs while deployed in theater. After their deployment ends, the dogs are retrained by America’s VetDogs to further serve in military or Veterans Administration medical centers as physical, occupational, or behavioral therapy dogs.


**ABSTRACT:** In July 2008, social worker and certified service dog trainer Rick Yount created the first Warrior dog-training program designed to be a safe, effective, nonpharmaceutical intervention to treat the symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury in Veterans and service members undergoing treatment at a large Veterans Administration residential treatment facility. In 2009, Yount was asked to establish the program at a prominent Department of Defense medical center. In October 2010, Yount was invited to create a service dog training program to support the research and treatment mission at the new National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE), in Bethesda, Maryland. This program, now being offered through the nonprofit foundation Warrior Canine Connection, continues to produce anecdotal evidence that training service dogs reduces the PTSD symptoms of Warrior-trainers and that the presence of the dogs enhances the sense of wellness in the NICoE staff and the families of our Wounded Warriors. Under the research leadership of the NICoE, the Warrior Canine Connection research team plans to systematically investigate the physiological, psychological, and behavioral benefits of this program.
ABSTRACT: Animal-assisted therapy, including visits from certified therapy dogs, offer a valuable and often underutilized resource for addressing unmet needs in cancer patients. Prospective research studies have documented symptomatic benefits for reducing pain, psychological distress, and fatigue in a variety of patient populations, including cancer patients. Utilizing consistent policies minimizes patient risk and infection control concerns associated with animal visits.

No abstract is available.

No abstract is available.

No abstract is available.

2011

ABSTRACT: BACKGROUND: To evaluate the effects of pet therapy on cognitive function, mood and perceived quality of life on elderly inpatients (mean age 84.7 years; 95.2 percent women) affected by dementia, depression and psychosis. METHODS: Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE) and 15-items Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) were administered to 10 patients (pet group) and 11 controls (control group) together with a self-perceived quality-of-life questionnaire, before and after a pet therapy intervention that lasted 6 weeks. MMSE and GDS mean scores were compared between and within groups by Student’s t-test. RESULTS: Both the pet group and control group improved on GDS and MMSE. Within the pet group, GDS symptoms decreased by 50 percent (from 5.9 to 2.7, P= 0.013), whereas mean MMSE score increased by 4.5 (P= 0.060). The between group comparison showed a positive effect of pet therapy intervention on GDS (P= 0.070). Most of the participants reported an improvement of their perceived quality of life. CONCLUSIONS: Pet therapy is efficient in improving depressive symptoms and cognitive function in residents of long-term care facilities with mental illness.

ABSTRACT: The purpose of this article is to increase nurses’ awareness of animal-assisted therapy as a treatment option for older adults with dementia. We describe the differences between animal visitation programs and goal-directed therapy. We also address credentials of human-animal teams and provide an overview of possible therapeutic outcomes for older adults with dementia. Step-by-step methods are outlined for nurses to advocate for clients with dementia to receive these services.

ABSTRACT: BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES: Canine-assisted therapy has been receiving growing attention as a means of aiding children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Yet, only limited studies have been done and a great deal of literature related to this intervention is anecdotal. The present study aims at providing additional quantitative evidence on the potential of dogs to positively modulate
the behavior of children with ASD. SETTINGS/LOCATION, SUBJECTS, AND INTERVENTIONS: A 12-year-old boy diagnosed with ASD was exposed, at his usual treatment location (the Portuguese Association for Developmental Disorders and Autism at Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal), to the following treatment conditions: (1) one-to-one structured activities with a therapist assisted by a certified therapy dog, and (2) one-to-one structured activities with the same therapist alone (as a control). To accurately assess differences in the behavior of the participant between these treatment conditions, the therapist followed a strict research protocol. The behavior of the participant was continuously video-recorded during both treatment conditions for further analysis and comparison. Treatment outcomes: In the presence of the dog, the participant exhibited more frequent and longer durations of positive behaviors (such as smiling and positive physical contacting) as well as less frequent and shorter durations of negative behaviors (such as aggressive manifestations). CONCLUSIONS: These findings are in accordance with previous experimental work and provide additional support for the assertion that dogs can prime autistic children for therapy. Ultimately, this study may contribute toward a change for full acceptance of canine-assisted therapy programs within the medical milieu. Additional studies using a similar research protocol on more autistic children will certainly help professionals to work on the most effective methods to individually serve this population through canine-assisted interventions.

ABSTRACT: Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) is the science that employs the merit of human-animal interaction to alleviate mental and physical problems of persons with disabilities. However, to achieve the goal of AAT for persons with severe disabilities (e.g. spinal cord injury and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis), real-time animal language interpretation is needed. Since canine behaviors can be visually distinguished from its tail, this paper proposes the automatic real-time interpretation of canine tail language for human-canine interaction in the case of persons with severe disabilities. Canine tail language is captured via two 3-axis accelerometers. Directions and frequency are selected as our features of interests. New fuzzy rules and center of gravity-based defuzzification method are proposed in order to interpret the features into three canine emotional behaviors, i.e., agitate, happy, and scare as well as its blended emotional behaviors. The emotional behavior model is performed in the simulated dog. The average recognition rate in real dog is 93.75 percent accuracy.

PMID: 21445521
ABSTRACT: Animal-Assisted Activity (AAA) consists in visitation and recreation through contact with animals, aiming at entertainment and improving the interpersonal relationship between patients and staff. Permission for the animals to visit an Institution requires a protocol with rules and safety routines to avoid accidents and zoonoses. The objective of this study is to describe the important points of the protocol to implement the AAA program. The protocol includes: introduction, objectives, inclusion and exclusion criteria for animals, drivers and patients; recommendations to the handlers and the health team, responsibilities of the Nosocomial Infection Control Committee, zoonoses posters, vaccination schedule for dogs and cats, free-informed consent to take part in the program and records with behavioral analysis of the animals. We believe that disclosing the protocol, based on scientific studies, favors the implementation of new programs in institutions considering the lack of national publications.

Minchella, L. (2011). Hot topics in special needs school nursing: Service animals in schools. NASN School Nurse, 26(2), 78-81. PMID: 21446308
No abstract is available.
2010

PMID: 21131720
Full-text is available at [http://ilarjournal.oxford-journals.org/content/51/3/199.long](http://ilarjournal.oxford-journals.org/content/51/3/199.long)

ABSTRACT: The term animal-assisted therapy (AAT) commonly refers to the presentation of an animal to one or more persons for the purpose of providing a beneficial impact on human health or well-being. AAT is an ideal example of “One Health” because of numerous studies and widespread testimonials indicating that many humans feel better in the presence of pets and other domesticated animals, and, conversely, that some of those creatures appear to respond positively to human company for their emotional and perhaps physical betterment. Many AAT studies have claimed a wide range of human health benefits, but much of the research is characterized by small-scale interventions among disparate fields, resulting in criticisms about weak study design or inconsistent methodology. Such criticisms contrast with the strongly held belief among many that interaction with friendly animals has a strong and innate value for the persons involved. Consequently the appeal of AAT in human medicine today may be generally characterized as a “push” by enthusiastic advocates rather than a “pull” by prescribing physicians. To fully integrate AAT into conventional medical practice as an accepted therapeutic modality, more convincing intervention studies are necessary to confirm its clinical merits, along with an understanding of the underlying mechanism of the human response to the company of friendly animals.

2009

PMID: 19556955

ABSTRACT: Animal-assisted therapy is a familiar method of treatment in the rehabilitation of many illnesses and conditions, but is still not applied sufficiently in our milieu. This paper gives an overview of the available literature and some of the research which demonstrates that the interaction between the patient, animal and therapist provides a context which improves communication, elevates self-confidence, reduces the symptoms of diseases, and improves the quality of life. The dog, cat, horse, birds and toy animals are most often used in therapy. Short-term contacts with animals are used, as well as long term keeping of animals which, are looked after by patients following a particular methodology. The therapy is used in the treatment of psychiatric patients afflicted with depression, schizophrenia, phobias and addiction problems. Loneliness is easier to endure in the company of animals. It is also applied in cardiovascular diseases, dementia, Alzheimer’s disease, child cerebral paralysis, rheumatoid arthritis, AIDS, and other diseases. Research shows a more rapid reduction of symptoms of many diseases when animals are included in the therapeutic process.

PMID: 19839680

ABSTRACT: This study elucidates the role of pets in recovery processes among adults with serious mental illness. Data derive from interviews with 177 HMO members with serious mental illness (52.2 percent women, average age 48.8 years) in the Study of Transitions and Recovery Strategies (STARS). Interviews and questionnaires addressed factors affecting recovery processes and included questions about pet ownership. Data were analyzed using a modified grounded theory method to identify the roles pets play in the recovery process. Primary themes indicate pets assist individuals in recovery from serious mental illness by (1) providing empathy and “therapy”; (2) providing connections that can assist in redeveloping social avenues; (3) serving as “family” in the absence of or in addition to human family members; and (4) supporting self-efficacy and strengthening a sense of empowerment. Pets appear to provide more benefits than merely companionship. Participants’ reports of pet-related contributions to their well-being provide impetus to conduct more formal research on the mechanisms by which pets contribute to recovery and to develop pet-based interventions.
2007

No abstract is available.

2006

ABSTRACT: Research has substantiated that animals improve human health, both psychologically and physiologically. Therefore, healthcare facilities have begun to implement programs, such as the “Furry Friends Foundation,” that bring animals into the facility to improve the quality of life of patients. When implementing these programs, consideration must be given to potential adverse events such as phobias, allergies, and particularly the possibility of zoonotic disease transmission. Santa Clara Valley Medical Centre (SCVMC), a 600-bed county teaching hospital with specialized units (e.g., for burns, rehabilitation, and pediatric care), has implemented programs that incorporate animals into the healthcare setting. This facility allows three categories of dogs to interact with their patients: service dogs, therapy dogs, and pet visitation dogs by the “Furry Friends Foundation.” A blurring of the roles of the three categories of dogs occurred when these programs were put into place at SCVMC. The American with Disabilities Act states that service animals cannot be prohibited from any area. For example, a “no pet allowed” policy could not apply to these animals. Proof of a person’s disability or proof of the service animal’s health or training cannot be required. The purpose of this project was to maintain these programs by clarifying the policies regarding animals, specifically dogs, in the healthcare setting. This had to take place to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for the patients and the staff. A comprehensive table was developed to delineate the three categories of dogs and the corresponding policies. Therapy dogs and the visitation animals are more restricted than service dogs. Both therapy dogs and visitation dogs require identification and certification of health and are excluded from certain areas of the facility, including intensive care units and isolation rooms. By complying with the current policies and regulations, the risks from these programs can be minimized. Staff should be educated on the proper terminology and procedures to prevent a blurring of the categories and roles of these animals.

ABSTRACT: BACKGROUND: Animal-assisted therapy (AAT) is gaining popularity as part of therapy programs in residential aged care facilities. Humans and pet dogs respond to quiet interaction with a lowering of blood pressure and an increase in neurochemicals associated with relaxation and bonding. These effects may be of benefit in ameliorating behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD). METHODS: Medline, PsychInfo and CINAHL databases (1960-2005) were searched for papers on AAT or pets and dementia. Publications of controlled trials that measured the effect of AAT for dementia were reviewed. RESULTS: Several small studies suggest that the presence of a dog reduces aggression and agitation, as well as promoting social behavior in people with dementia. One study has shown that aquaria in dining rooms of dementia care units stimulate residents to eat more of their meals and to gain weight but is limited by the small number of facilities studied. There is preliminary evidence that robotic pets may provide pleasure and interest to people with dementia. One study has shown that aquaria in dining rooms of dementia care units stimulate residents to eat more of their meals and to gain weight but is limited by the small number of facilities studied. There is preliminary evidence that robotic pets may provide pleasure and interest to people with dementia. CONCLUSIONS: Current literature suggests that AAT may ameliorate BPSD, but the duration of the beneficial effect has not been explored. The relative benefits of “resident” versus “visiting” pet dogs are unclear and are confounded by the positive effect of pet interaction on staff or caregivers. Further research on the potential benefits of AAT is recommended.
2005


Full-text in Spanish is available at http://tinyurl.com/mjtmb9bo

ABSTRACT: Animal-assisted therapy is a novel interventional program with important benefits in the management of patients with chronic diseases and prolonged hospitalization. The relationship between animals and patients facilitates adaptation to a new, stressing hospital environment, helps in diminishing anxiety, stress, pain and blood pressure and increases mobility and muscular strength. This therapy can be developed by pets themselves or by specially trained animals. Dogs are the most frequently used animals because of their training and sociability skills. Patients and animals participating in these programs require special care in order to avoid transmission of infectious diseases associated with pets, hypersensitivity and accidents during their visits. Implementation of animal-assisted therapy in care centers requires a permanent revision of suggested guidelines and program objectives.


ABSTRACT: Animal-assisted therapy (AAT) is a goal-directed intervention, which involves placing appropriately qualified animals into the therapeutic environment of human patients. AAT is also a cross-professional cooperation model combining different health related disciplines, such as veterinary science, animal behavior, medicine, nursing, rehabilitation, and education. Based on concepts of concern for the welfare of both humans and animals, AAT provides an alternative route to comprehensive human health. This article describes the development and current state of canine Animal-Assisted Therapy in Taiwan. It covers the development of the relationship between humans and animals, a review of the literature about AAT, research, development, and outcomes in respect of the current AAT system in Taiwan. It also discusses practical issues concerning the AAT system, by means of examples. Suggestions regarding future services, professional development, education and research are also discussed.

2002


ABSTRACT: The present study quantitatively evaluated the effects of interaction with dogs on children with pervasive developmental disorders (PDD), disorders characterized by lack of social communications and abilities. While interacting with a therapist, children were exposed to three different conditions: (1) a nonsocial toy (ball), (2) a stuffed dog, and (3) a live dog. Prosocial and nonsocial interactions were evaluated in terms of both behavioral and verbal dimensions. Results show that children exhibited a more playful mood, were more focused, and were more aware of their social environments when in the presence of a therapy dog. These findings indicate that interaction with dogs may have specific benefits for this population and suggest that animal-assisted therapy (AAT) may be an appropriate form of therapy.


No abstract is available.


ABSTRACT: PURPOSE: There has been an increase in the use of service animals assisting persons with disabilities in the past decade. However many of the service dog agencies do not utilize an assessment that is designed to match the person to the animal in the rehabilitation and psycho-social domains. The purpose of this study was to develop the Service Animal
Adaptive Intervention Assessment (SAAIA) and to measure the content validity, inter-rater reliability and clinical utility of the assessment. METHOD: Two subject groups were used. Subject group one had 43 subjects who measured the content validity and clinical utility of the SAAIA Survey. Subject group two had 12 subjects who measured the inter-rater reliability by completing the SAAIA using information obtained through a video-taped client case scenario. RESULTS: Content validity results indicated a good to high percentage of agreement and a fair percentage of agreement for clinical utility. Inter-rater reliability results indicate good to high agreement on six of the eight variables of the SAAIA. However, the Kappa score indicates low inter-rater reliability. CONCLUSION: Results indicate the SAAIA has good content validity and inter-rater reliability and fair clinical utility based on percent agreement. However, further research is needed on the reliability of the SAAIA.

2000

ABSTRACT: Animal-assisted therapy has gained widespread support and application over the past few decades. This article reviews the history of animal-assisted therapy; discusses its present goals and applications, including those pertinent to critical care; and notes questions requiring further research.

1997

ABSTRACT: Spinal cord injury (SCI) is a devastating event that results in significant adjustments during the acute and rehabilitation phase. During this period, it is imperative to maintain the patient’s self-esteem, reduce stress levels, encourage the expression of feelings, and provide sensory stimulation. Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) involves the use of animals as a complement to more traditional forms of therapy. The program is based on the knowledge that animals have a positive influence on people who are ill in the healthcare setting. The Animals Heal Hearts Program (TM) has two components, pet visitation and pet therapy. Pet visitation consists of allowing a patient to have his/her own personal dog for a visit, provided there are no medical contraindications. Pet therapy is a structured program using a dog that has completed behavioral and health screening. Dogs are used in the hospital to reduce patients’ stress, increase their self-esteem, and help them express feelings. The dogs provide sensory stimulation as patients view and handle the animals and learn about animals and pets. A carefully planned and evaluated program ensures that it is safe and effective.
Quick Looks

Online Resources Related to Service Animals and/or Animal-Assisted Therapy

ADA Network Information Sheet on Service Animals
adata.org/sites/cms.adata.org/files/files/ADA_fact-sheet_5.pdf
adata.org/service-animals

American Hippotherapy Association, Inc.
Hippotherapy is a physical, occupational or speech and language therapy treatment strategy that utilizes equine movement. This strategy has evolved over 30 years. Through education and clinical experience, physical, occupational and speech and language therapists continue to refine the use of hippotherapy as part of an integrated rehabilitation approach.
Phone: 877/851-4592
Email: info@americanhippotherapyassociation.org
www.americanhippotherapyassociation.org

American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) – Guidelines for Animal Assisted Activity, Animal-Assisted Therapy and Resident Animal Programs

Assistance Dog Institute (ADI)
Phone: 707/545-3647
Email: info@assistancedog.org
www.assistancedog.org

Assistance Dogs International
Email: info@assistedogsinternational.org

Canine Companions for Independence
Toll Free: 800/572-2275, 707/577-1700 (V), 707/577-1756 (TTY)
Email: info@caninecompanions.org
www.caninecompanions.org

Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association, Inc. (EAGALA)
Founded in 1999, EAGALA is the leading international nonprofit association for professionals using equine therapy to address mental health and human development needs.
Toll-free in the U.S.: 877/858-4600, 801/754-0400
Contact: www.eagala.org/contact
www.eagala.org

Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind, Inc.
Toll Free: 800/548-4337, 631/930-9000
Email: info@guidedog.org
www.guidedog.org

Guide Dogs of America
Phone: 818/362-5834, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. PST
Email: mail@guidedogsofamerica.org
www.guidedogsofamerica.org

Guide Horse Foundation
Phone: 252/431-0050
Email: info@guidehorse.com
www.guidehorse.org

Helping Hands Monkey Helpers
Contact: www.monkeyhelpers.org/about-us/contact-us
www.monkeyhelpers.org

International Hearing Dog, Inc. (IHDI)
Phone: 303/287-3277 (V/TTY)
Email: IHDI@aol.com
www.ihdi.org

Job Accommodation Network – Accommodation and Compliance Series: Service Animals in the Workplace
Full-text: http://askjan.org/media/downloads/ServiceAnimalsintheWorkplace.pdf
Doc: http://askjan.org/media/downloads/ServiceAnimalsintheWorkplace.doc
askjan.org/media/servanim.html
Leader Dogs for the Blind
Toll Free:  888/777-5332, 248/651-9011 (V), 248/651-3713 (TTY)
Email:  leaderdog@leaderdog.org
www.leaderdog.org

National Education for Assistance Dogs Services (NEADS)
Phone:  978/422-9064 (V/TTY)
Prison Program:  978/422-0496
www.neads.org

National Resource Directory (NRD) – Service Animals
NRD is a website that connects wounded warriors, Service Members, Veterans, their families, and caregivers to programs and services that support them.
www.nrd.gov/other_services_and_resources/service_animals

Pet Partners formerly Delta Society – Service Animals
Phone:  425/679-5500, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. PST
Email:  info@petpartners.org
AAA/AAT Information:
www.petpartners.org/AAA-Tinformation
Service Animal Trainer Directory:  www.petpartners.org/servicedogtrainerdirectory
www.petpartners.org

Revised ADA Requirements: Service Animals - ADA.gov
www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm

Transportation Security Administration (TSA) – Information on Traveling with Service Animals
www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/service-animals
www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/passengers-service-dogs

U.S. Department of Agriculture Information on Companion, Service, and Working Animals
awic.nal.usda.gov/companion-animals/service-and-working-animals/assistance-animals

U.S. Department of Justice—Civil Rights Division—Disability Right Section
Commonly asked questions about service animals in places of business
www.ada.gov/qaSRCV.htm
Search Terms for Service Animals and Animal-Assisted Therapy

- Accessibility
- Accommodations
- Adaptation
- Adolescent
- Adults
- Agricultural Occupations
- Alzheimer Disease
- Animal Assisted Therapy
- Animal Husbandry
- Anxiety
- Aphasia
- At Risk Persons
- Attachment Behavior
- Attitude Measures
- Autism/Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Behavior Modification
- Birds
- Bonding/Between Human-Animal
- Case Studies
- Cats
- Cerebral Palsy
- Child Abuse/Advocacy/Behavior
- Health/Welfare
- Children
- Classroom Environment
- Cognitive Therapy
- Combat Disorders
- Communication/Disorders/Skills/Verbal
- Complementary Therapies
- Counseling Services/Techniques/Theories
- Curriculum Development
- Death
- Dementia
- Depression
- Developmental Disabilities
- Disabilities
- Discrimination
- Disease Transmission
- Dogs
- Dolphins
- Education/Elementary/Secondary

- Educational Benefits/Environment/Legislation
- Strategies
- Emotions
- Equine-Assisted Therapy
- Ethics
- Foreign Countries
- Geriatrics
- Grief
- Group Counseling-Therapy
- Guidelines
- Health Needs
- Helping Relationship
- Holistic Approach
- Home Schooling
- Horses
- Hospitals
- Humanization
- Individualized Education Programs/Instruction
- Infection Control
- Institutionalization
- Interpersonal Communication/Competence
- Relationship
- Intervention
- Learning Disabilities/Strategies
- Literacy Education
- Loneliness
- Mainstreaming
- Mental Disorders
- Mental Health Professionals
- Military Medicine/Personnel
- Models
- Natural Language Processing
- Nonverbal Communication
- Nurse’s Role
- Nursing Homes
- Occupational Therapy
- Outcomes of Treatment
- Pain Management
- Parents
- Patient Safety
- Personalty/Issues
### Search Terms for Service Animals and Animal-Assisted Therapy continued...

- Pervasive Developmental Disorders
- Pets
- Physical Activities/Mobility/Therapy Therapists
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Post-Traumatic Therapy
- Practice Guidelines
- Primates
- Program Descriptions/Development Effectiveness/Implementation
- Prosocial Behavior
- Psychiatric Disabilities
- Psychotherapy
- Public Education/Schools
- Quality of Life
- Rabbits
- Reading Comprehension/Difficulties Instruction/Interventions/Programs/Skills Strategies
- Recreational Activities
- Rehabilitation
- Rural Schools
- Safety Management
- School Community-Relationship/Counseling Nursing/Policy/Safety
- Self-Concept/Efficacy/Esteem
- Sensory Experience
- Service Animals
- Sexual Abuse
- Skill Development
- Social Behavior/Development/Isolation Networks/Support Groups/Work
- Socialization
- Special Education
- Speech Therapy
- Spinal Cord Injuries (SCI)
- Stress/Management
- Students with Disabilities
- Symptoms
- Therapeutic Environment/Recreation
- Therapy
- Trauma
- Treatment Outcome
- Veterans
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Volunteers
- Well Being
- Youth
About reSearch:

reSearch is an information product from the National Rehabilitation Information Center (NARIC). Each issue is based on real-world queries received by our information specialists from researchers, educators, and rehabilitation professionals around the world.

We search several sources both in-house and online, to fill these requests including:

- REHABDATA and the NIDRR Program database
- Education Resources Information Center
- National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials
- Campbell and Cochrane Collaborations
- PubMed and other National Library of Medicine databases
- Agency for Health Care Policy and Research databases
- Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange
- and other reputable, scholarly information resources.

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- NARIC Information and Media Team