PROBLEM ADDRESS, NO KEYWORDS, 962 WORDS

EXTRACTING THE DOMESTIC DOG FROM THE MYTH OF THE WOLF – AND WHY DOMINANCE IS AN OBSERVATION, NOT A MOTIVATION

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For most of the 20th century, it was widely accepted that the wolf was not only the domestic dog's ancestor, it was also our best point of comparison for understanding the dog's social behaviour and motivations. Over the past decade, new evidence has accumulated from both ethological and cognitive studies, which suggests that the dog has evolved so far from the wolf that such comparisons may actually mislead dog owners. A new concept of dog social behaviour is emerging, one that has profound implications both for our understanding of behavioural disorders and for approaches to behaviour modification, including dog training.

At the same time, there has been something of a revolution in the way that biologists interpret the social behaviour of the wolf. Until the 1990s, most detailed observations of wolves were done on artificially-constructed captive packs. Unrelated wolves of the same sex are instinctively antagonistic to one another, and when forced to live together will establish a "dominance hierarchy" based on exchange of aggressive displays. From such observations arose the concept that achieving "dominance" is the primary motivation behind much of wolf social behaviour. However, once extended observation of free-living packs became possible, a completely different picture emerged. The typical wolf pack is now known to be a family unit, consisting of two parents and their offspring, not only the dependent cubs, but also young adults that have not yet left the pack and are helping their parents to raise their younger siblings. Far from being forced to stay by displays of aggression, these young adults remain with the pack voluntarily. Aggression within these packs is rare, but there are frequent spontaneous displays of what was (and often still is) called "active submission", which should now more accurately be termed "affiliative" or "cohesive" behaviour.

Simultaneously, two extensive studies of free-ranging dogs have indicated that their social systems are more primitive than those of the wolf. Sunil Pal and his colleagues, studying village dogs in India, have shown that while they form packs with shared territories, pack structure is much looser than that of the wolf. All adult females attempt to breed, and often mate with multiple males, mainly from outside their own pack. Males rarely participate in raising young, beyond guarding the female, and pair-bonds are usually short-lived. While a "dominance hierarchy" can be measured, position in the hierarchy bears no relationship to breeding success. Thomson and colleagues had earlier found a similar mating system in dingoes in Western Australia, where all females over 10 months old attempt to breed. It therefore appears that domestication has eliminated some of the more sophisticated aspects of wolf breeding behaviour, leaving the domestic dog with a system similar to that of more primitive canids, such as the coyote.

Two of the key effects of domestication are the tolerance that dogs show towards unfamiliar dogs and people, and a major expansion of the socialisation period, not only extended in duration compared to that of the wolf, but also in its plasticity, particularly reflected in the number of species to which socialisation can occur. Recent cognitive studies are revealing another effect, the replacement of the wolf's social sophistication with the dog's unique ability to learn how to comprehend human behaviour and especially attempts at communication. Such changes have enabled dogs to fill the wide variety of roles that they perform today within the context of human society, and so are essentially adaptive, evolved traits.

Despite these advances in our understanding of wolf sociality, and the many differences between dogs and wolves, the behaviour of dogs is still often interpreted as if they were wolves, and especially in terms of the "dominance" structures evident from studies of captive wolves. Although dogs are (obviously) less aggressive than wolves are, they are often portrayed as motivated by a desire to control the behaviour not only of other dogs but also the people that they live with. However, with the possible exception of sled dogs, studies of dominance relationships among groups of domestic dogs have failed to demonstrate the clear-cut hierarchies that would be predicted by such a concept. Moreover, biologists have perhaps failed to clarify sufficiently that simply because an external observer can record a dominance hierarchy, it does not automatically follow that the animals being observed are aware that such a structure exists, and even if they are, that such awareness is a primary motivator of their behaviour.

Dogs undoubtedly exhibit competitive behaviour under some circumstances, but rather than using motivation to achieve “dominance” as the explanation, it is simpler to use the concept of learned strategies of behaviour. For example, when deciding whether or not to escalate aggression with another dog, an adult dog will use its experience of previous encounters with that dog or similar dogs, and the signals emitted by that dog indicating its motivation. It will then compare its assessment of these with its own motivational/ emotional state (*e.g.* hunger, anxiety) to determine what signals and/or actual aggression it should deploy. Moreover, so-called “dominance aggression” is in reality often found to be a habitual defensive strategy, originally a last-resort tactic motivated by anxiety and fear, but which has become that dog’s first-choice response to perceived threat. Dog trainers who advocate the use of physical punishment often use suppression of “dominance motivation” as their justification. If “dominance motivation” is a myth, and much of the aggression exhibited by dogs is actually motivated by fear or anxiety, then reward-based training is not only ethically preferable, but should also be more successful, because it shapes behaviour while simultaneously allowing the dog to establish a balanced emotional state. Several recent studies have indicated that the inclusion of physical punishment in dog training is indeed associated with lower levels of obedience and a higher occurrence of behavioural disorders.

Key words: temperament test; kitten; behavior; predictability; adoption

NO KEYWORDS, 348 WORDS, ONE REFERENCE

CASE REPORT: SEXUAL FRUSTRATION AND AGGRESSIVE INCIDENTS TOWARDS OWNER AND HER DOG BY A CASTRATED MALE CAT

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A 17 year old castrated male DSH cat was presented for sudden onset of repeated episodes of aggression towards the pet dog and its owner during the previous 8 months. The problem was reported to occur when the cat was highly aroused. The owner reported many injuries from the cat. In addition, despite the age and neuter status of the cat, the owner described a tendency by the cat to perform apparently sexual mounting behaviour towards a stuffed monkey toy several times per day, starting around the same time.

Physical examination showed signs of cataract and decreased vision in both eyes, but no other abnormalities of clinical relevance. Haematological and biochemical profiles were normal. Given the cat's age, the owner refused further investigation such as an MRI, and so a tentative diagnosis of central ischemic damage was made, given the acute onset of coincident signs. Sexual and aggressive behaviour are regulated by closely related nuclei in the hypothalamus, and damage to these structures normally has a suppressive effect, but they are subject to inhibitory control from subcortical structures including ansa lenticularis and globus pallidus and cortical regions, like frontal lobes and amygdala in temporal lobes (Baird et al. 2007). It was therefore assumed that regulation of the nuclei rather than the nuclei themselves were damaged.

Conservative treatment based on behaviour and environment modification to allow the cat to perform the mounting behaviour and safe play interactions between the owner and the cat was recommended in the first instance. However, one month later the owner requested further assistance and fluoxetine (0.5 mg/kg/daily) was prescribed based on the potential for SSRI's to raise behavioural thresholds and reduce impulsivity. After one month of fluoxetine treatment the owner reported a great improvement in the cat's behaviour.

Key words: temperament test; kitten; behavior; predictability; adoption

Reference:

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TOO MUCH KEYWORDS, 220 WORDS

PARROT BEHAVIOUR, HANDLING PARROTS, DEALING WITH BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

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Addressing the welfare of parrots is the responsibility of avian veterinarians and caretakers. It is important to acknowledge and to deal with behaviour problems in parrots. A 5-step protocol is presented to enable veterinarians and caregivers to handle parrots in a professional way, to reduce the stress of handling, and create mutual trust and respect. It is the responsibility of veterinarians to be positive role models and to educate owners/clients about how to take care of their parrots. Wing clipping enables caretakers to take the bird outside and benefit from the social interaction, sun and fresh air. The disadvantages of having a parrot on the shoulder are discussed. Organizing parrot walks/parrot picnics is suggested as one way to educate caregivers and to improve the health and welfare of avian companions. Parrots, under our care, deserve so much better. A method is described how to deal with and how to handle parrots with behaviour problems.

Key words: temperament test; kitten; behavior; predictability; adoption

behaviour, intelligence, behaviour problems, unwanted behaviour, displacement behaviour, behaviour protocol, handling, responsibility, welfare, education, wing clipping, parrot walk, parrot picnic, hand rearing

291 WORDS

CASE REPORT: LUNA-A QUITE NORMAL RABBIT IN BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY

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Luna was a one year old rabbit living with a couple and another rabbit. The rabbits were housed in a commercial cage with constant free access to the whole apartment. The problem started 4-6 weeks after the owners got the rabbits from an animal shelter. The rabbit "Luna" started to nibble at several pieces of furniture. The owners tried to stop this behaviour using positive punishment such as scolding and chasing, which did not solve the problem.

The areas Luna had worked on were primarily carpets, cables and wallpapers. The first step was to explain the basics of rabbit behaviour to the owners. They were asked to make one room "rabbit proof", i.e. to make sure the rabbits had no opportunity to nibble at anything that the owners did not want to allow them to. Further on they created a rabbit area with environmental enrichment where the animals were allowed to nibble at items the owner presented (e. g. branches). This area also offered the rabbits the opportunity to keep busy by working for their food (e. g. with feed&treat®). Additionally, the owners were taught how to teach their rabbits a "time out" signal and how to train them to come when called. The problem was solved within just a few weeks.

Like dogs and cats, rabbits are also able to learn how to cope with their environment that humans expect them to live in we asked them to live in as well as dog and cats and it is possible to train them to "behave properly".

Key words: rabbit; problem behavior; destruction

NO KEYWORDS, 1766 WORDS, MANY REFERENCES AND TABLES

"THE SILENT OUCH!" - RECOGNISING THE IMPORTANCE OF PAIN IN EQUINE PROBLEM BEHAVIOUR

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The prevalence of pain in equine behaviour problems remains largely unknown, although one study (Nielson 2007) of non-veterinary behaviourists suggested that physical problems may occur in about 46% of equine problem behaviour cases. It should also be acknowledged that problems of poorly fitting tack appear to frequently go unnoticed and unreported. Therefore it seems reasonable to suppose that it is both common and an under-recognised welfare problem. When considering a case it is important to assess not just the patient but also the riding gear and riding ability of those using the horse, if a problem occurs under saddle. Assessing pain in horses and its involvement in problem behaviour is particular challenging. Not only is the clinician faced with the general problem of the subjective nature of pain , but the nature of horses means that the expression of pain is often very limited compared to many of the other species frequently encountered in clinical behaviour practice. Thirdly many problem behaviours are often associated with either chronic pain or transient acute episodes, either of which are particularly challenging to detect.
Pain is defined as "an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage, or described in terms of such damage" (IASP 2011). Thus pain is an emotional response, which like other emotional responses is an individualised appraisal by a subject of a stimulus, in this case nociception. However, it should also be recognised that the International Association for the Study of Pain, go on further to note: "Pain is always subjective. ... Activity induced in the nociceptor and nociceptive pathways by a noxious stimulus is not pain, which is always a psychological state". The implication of this is that pain cannot be understood by purely considering the stimulus or pathological changes that result in nociception, but rather it needs to be understood in the context of the individual and their resilience and or sensitivity to pain. Nonetheless the identification of a pathological lesion is a useful starting point in the determination of the possible role of pain in a given case. In equine practice it is often said, "Anyone can fail a horse at a prepurchase examination, but it takes courage to pass one". This is because it is often relatively easy to elicit lameness in one or more joints as a result of a flexion test, but this does not mean that there is significant joint pain; and so the clinician should not think that just because a pain focus can be identified that it is *necessarily* relevant. However, the precautionary principle, suggests that if in doubt we should give greater weight to the possibility that an animal is in pain than the possibility that it is not. Trial analgesia may be useful in this context, but there are also simpler measures that can be taken to guide the assessment, before deciding on whether such an intervention is justified. To start with the clinician should carefully consider from the presenting complaint, where any focus of pain might be. The behavioural history should then explore the likelihood of this in more detail by looking for both corroborating evidence, but also evidence which may discount this possibility. In some instances, there may be adjunctive signs which go largely unreported unless prompted, examples are given in Table 1 below. This table also details some common

behavioural problems in the horse which may have pain as a primary cause, and the likely site of such pain.

Table 1. Some expressions of pain in the horse and possible source, together with other possible medical differentials (adapted from McDonnell 2005)

Observation	Possible physical cause
Reluctance or difficulty lying down / getting up	Limb, foot, back or neck pain
Periods of changed alertness without obvious trigger	CNS, acute pain
Occasional clumsiness in moving	Neurological problem, navicular pain
Leaning onto wall, fence or corner	Neurological H/L pain
Head tilt	Neurological, middle ear, head pain
Head held very low	Neck pain , weakness, respiratory
Unusual standing posture	Neurologic, limb pain
Stiff gait	Muscular, spinal limb pain
Frequent pawing rolling and/or dog-sitting	Abdominal pain
Tail lifting, slapping	Abdominal , urogenital pain
Frequent urination posturing / straining to urinate	Abdominal, urogenital pain
Frequent defecation posturing / straining to defecate	Caudal abdominal pain
Hind leg lifting or drawing of leg up towards abdomen	Abdominal pelvic pain think other than GI colic
Kicking out with one or both hindlimbs	Abdominal, pelvic pain
Kicking towards abdomen	Abdominal pain
Foot stamping	Skin irritation, abdominal pain
Tail / hindquarters rubbing	Perineal / vaginal irritation
Head tossing or biting at back	Back or skin irritation
Head tossing or biting at abdomen	Abdominal pain
Head tossing or biting at shoulder / chest	Local myopathic pain
Head tossing or biting at flank	Abdominal pelvic pain
Biting at legs / rubbing legs against each other	Limb or skin pain
Frequent shifting of weight between hindlimbs	Foot pain, back pain, caudal abdominal or pelvic pain
Frequent shifting of weight between forelimbs	Foot pain
Frequent shifting of weight between fore and hind limbs	Limb inc foot or back pain
Refusal / reluctance to move	Limb, abdominal or spinal pain
Sudden interruption of ongoing behaviour	Sharp pain
Muscle twitching on shoulder, flank or hind quarters	Myopathy or local seizure
Vertical headshaking	Facial or oral pain Trigeminal neuralgia
Figure-of-8 head toss	Intranasal irritation, frustration or any type of pain

Horizontal headshaking	Caudal head pain
Lip-curling / flehmen in absence of new odours	Intranasal pain, sudden intermittent or chronic pain / irritation
Nose rubbing	Nasal pain
Hiding of nose in the shade	Hypersensitive area
Reluctance to eat or drink	General pain
Reluctance to forage from a raised hay-net etc	Neck pain
Frequent rolling	Abdominal or skin pain
Teeth grinding / grimacing	Extreme physical pain, CNS
Lip quivering	Sudden intermittent or chronic pain / irritation
Frequent yawning / sighing	Sudden intermittent or chronic pain / irritation
Frequent lip licking / smacking	Sudden intermittent or chronic pain / irritation
Frequent masturbation (>36/d for stallions, >24/d for gelding	Pain, genital irritation
Incomplete serving	Musculoskeletal, spinal or urogenital pain
Reluctance to mount /serve a mare	Musculoskeletal, spinal or urogenital pain
Reluctance to load	Distal limb/ spinal pain
Reluctance to being saddled / mounted	Spinal mm-skeletal pain
Headshyness	Facial pain
Champing / playing with the bit	Sore mouth
Bucking	Sore back
Rearing	Sore mouth
Knapping	Sore mouth , back
Dip in form	Sub-acute pain, overtraining
Increased aggression when approached	Subacute pain
Change in temperament	Subacute pain

Abdominal pain may be due to kidney stones, bladder stones, inguinal hernia. testicular torsion, vaginitis vesiculitis as well as GI problems.

The ability to extract a pain behaviour history is often as dependent upon the knowledge and attention of the primary carer of the horse as it is on the skill of the clinician in extracting relevant history and should be accompanied by a careful physical examination to identify any possible lesion. In some instances it can be useful to box the horse for a period of time and take a time-lapse video recording of it over a period of 24hrs. When this is played back at high speed, then restless or abnormal patterning of behaviour, indicative of pain may become more obvious. Summary data relating to the normal range and pattern of behaviour of horses in this context are given in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Behavioural reference range for boxed horses, from McDonnell (2005)

Activity	Episodes /day	Duration
Major shift	30-110	20-60’ undisturbed
Standing resting	10-30	5-120’ each; 8-12h total
Recumbent rest	0-6	10-80’each; 0-6h total
Feeding >3forage/d	10-30	5-30’each; 4-12h total
Drinking	2-8	10-60’’each; 1-8’ total
Urinating	4-15	
Defecating	4-15	
Rolling	2-8	2-8 rolls/bout
Erection /masturbation	18-36 stallion; 9-24 gelding	

As a prey species, horses are not predisposed to show overt pain. Although emotional responses typically have at least in part a communicative function, this is not so obviously adaptive for horses as it is in a social group hunter-scavenger like the dog. However, this does not mean that they do not feel pain. Indeed the International Association for the Study of Pain, specifically note: “The inability to communicate …. does not negate the possibility that an individual is experiencing pain and is in need of appropriate pain-relieving treatment”. Nonetheless it is important to distinguish the physical limitations on movement that might be associated with a pain-free lesion from any pain induced by a lesion. Provocation tests and careful behavioural evaluation may be very important in this regard, but in this case, it is then important to distinguish anticipation of pain from actual pain. Thus, for example, a horse may rapidly develop an adaptive strategy of avoidance, such as aggression when approached, following a painful episode of a rider on its back to prevent the painful incident from occurring (i.e. pain when the rider sits on its back). In this case the avoidance response may continue even after the sensitivity of the back has passed. The horse will only learn that it will no longer hurt if the back is actually put under pressure. However this must be done with caution to avoid the risk of injury. But once done and an absence of pain is established, horses often appear to adjust their behaviour back to normal quite rapidly.

Low grade chronic pain is not only extremely debilitating, but also extremely difficult to determine with great confidence, nonetheless given the nature and distribution of orthopaedic lesions frequently found in horses, it would seem that it is probably quite common in this species. Any history of a change in temperament, irritability, unpredictability, a loss of form, or refusal to perform certain acts should be evaluated in this light first rather than as a sign of stubbornness or sourness on behalf of the horse. Indeed, in the interests of protecting animal welfare, it should be assumed that pain plays a role until it can be demonstrated otherwise. To this end it is also essential that equine practitioners and not just behaviour clinicians take a serious interest in equine related behaviour problems.

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238 WORDS

CASE REPORT: MUSCULOSKELETAL PAIN AS A CAUSE OF INTERSPECIES AGGRESSION IN A PONY

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An eleven-year-old New Forest pony mare presented for aggression to humans. The client described her as "cross and very irritable" and had taken her to veterinarians and 'horse whisperers' for years.

An attempt to manually palpate the neck and back area resulted in kicking, striking and rearing. This behaviour had frequently been inadvertently reinforced in the past. The pony showed a subtle 1/5 (AAEP scale) right fore lameness at the trot on a hard surface on a straight line, on the left circle 2/5 left fore and on the right 2/5 right fore lame. After a low palmar block right fore the pony was sound on the straight line and on the right circle, but the pony became 3/5 left fore lame on the left circle.

Radiological examination of both distal forelimbs was negative. On follow up MRI of the right fore foot, a longitudinal tear was found in the medial branch of the DDFT and there was evidence of tendonitis.

Behaviour modification (including clicker training), modified shoeing (supportive wedge pad, rolled toe), very restricted exercise and the temporary use of Metacam® was recommended. The prognosis was guarded as the pony had shown the behaviour and had possibly suffered from the lameness, neck and back pain for a very long-time.

The pony's behaviour significantly improved.

Careful history taking and a thorough physical examination with the use of further diagnostics (if necessary) are essential when dealing with equine aggression.

Key words: equine; pain; interspecies aggression; welfare

284 WORDS, REFERENCES

RISK ASSESSMENT AND REHABILITATION TRAINING FOR SHELTERED DOGS (INTRODUCTION)

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Assessing the risk any dog adopted from a shelter might pose for owners or third parties, is of vital importance for both successful adoption and reduction of harm for others. In addition the dog's welfare is influenced as the assessment will bring about decisions on measures such as the use of a muzzle or lead, where to place a dog, which behavioural training needs to be done or, in extreme cases, whether it would be more appropriate to euthanase the animal. Risk assessment via temperament tests and/or owner questionnaires in general is by now well established (Jones & Gossling, 2005; Hsu & Serpell, 2003), although the different test's reliability and validity is still under discussion (Taylor & Mills, 2006). Testing in a shelter environment is especially problematic due to environmental conditions and missing human attachment figures ("owner") (Valsecchi et al., 2011). These factors are of special importance also in relation to a successful behavioural modification programme in, for example, the case of aggression problems.

This introduction will give an overview of test-protocol, rehabilitation training protocols and overall outcome for tentative rehabilitation programme established about four years ago in the shelter run by the Hamburg Society for the prevention of Cruelty to Animals (HTV). Dogs with aggression problems are either admitted to rehabilitation training following a standard keepers observation protocol or after a standardised and validated temperament test (Schoening, 2006). Following observation protocol or test and, if necessary, medical examination and intervention, an individual behavioural modification programme is developed. For every "problem-dog" an individual "attachment-keeper" is assigned who is responsible for running the programme. The attachment-keeper's regular reports inform decisions about programme modifications and/or timing of the re-test and finally where to place the dog.

Key words: risk assessment; dog; aggression; shelter

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Case report: Role of reconciliation in the resolution of conflict between familiar felines

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Key words: feline aggression, reconciliation, affiliative behaviours

Introduction:
Reconciliation is the tendency of two opponents to exchange affiliative contacts shortly after a conflict in order to manage the negative consequences of the conflict (de Waal, 1979). Following an aggressive incident cats may display aggression, stress responses, avoidance or tolerance rather than post conflict affiliative behaviours. This case presentation demonstrates the development of affiliative interactions following redirected aggression and speculates on the role of therapeutic facilitation of reconciliation for treatment of feline aggression.

Case presentation:
Familiar house mate felines (aged 3 and 4.5 years, both female neutered) experienced a redirected aggression event instigated by an unfamiliar cat outside the home. The family separated the cats and attempted to reunite the cats multiple times during a three month period but experienced escalating aggression. The cats were presented for behaviour consultation with the author and began a therapy programme including: Reconcile® (fluoxetine), Feliway® and desensitisation exercises. Desired resources were provided near a barrier which included a viewing window. The cats could be engaged in treat sessions, observe through the window or be rotated into the other's space but mild agitation suggested risk for aggressive events. The author recommended short opportunities for the cats to be in the same room without any owner attempt to engage with or direct the cats. A series of videos showed mild agonistic displays including posturing, retreating, pursuing and reconciliation with affiliative behaviours including facial rubbing, anal sniffing and greetings including "tail up" approach. The "tail up" position has been hypothesised to function to inhibit aggressive behaviour (Cafazzo, 2009). These sessions of 'quiet relaxation' were extended from minutes to hours over several weeks. Currently, the cats have free shared access to all living areas anytime family members are in the home. Treatment with Reconcile® and Feliway® continues. The cats do not display overtly aggressive interactions and no fights have occurred for more than a year. These cats do engage in brief affiliative and social behaviours daily. The family reports ongoing improvement in the quality of their interactions.

Conclusions and implications:
Consideration of the ethogram and social communication repertoire of affiliative behaviours in cats may provide prognostic or therapeutic information about the potential for reconciliation following aggression between familiar cats. Whether dyads may be taught to reconcile or the occurrence of reconciliative behaviour indicates successful stabilisation of feline relationships is not clear and should be the subject of further consideration and study.

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NO KEYWORDS 271 WORDS

VIDEO RECORDING AS AN USEFUL TOOL IN DIAGNOSING SEPARATION RELATED PROBLEMS IN DOGS: COMPARING TWO CLINICAL CASES

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Two cases with similar behavioural signs are described to underline how videos can help in diagnosing canine separation related problems. Luna (a 9 year old female Czechoslovakian Wolfdog) and Cupido (a 2 year old male Labrador Retriever) underwent behavioural consultations at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Pisa (Italy) with similar reported symptoms: destruction, vocalisation and housesoiling in the owners' absence. Both cases were referred with diagnosis of "separation anxiety". The dogs lived only indoors and were left alone at home for more than 5 hours per day. Cupido had been adopted when he was 18 months old after being rejected as a guide dog for health reasons (elbow dysplasia). Luna had been adopted when she was 2 months old and had always lived with her owners. For each dog 3 hours of video recording at different times during the day, after the owners' departure, were used to analyse the dogs' behaviour.

Cupido showed normal exploration, episodes of urination, defecation and one episode of autocoprophagy. Most of his behaviours seemed to be related to hypostimulation and frustration rather than anxiety. Luna showed abnormal, increased motor activity, panting, massive destruction near the exit door and on a window and episodes of emotional urination, confirming the diagnosis of separation anxiety.

After the consultation, Cupido's routine was completely changed, with the help of a dog sitter and increasing environmental enrichment when left alone (e.g. Kong®). For Luna, pharmacological support was added to the behavioural therapy. Both dogs showed improvement.

These examples suggest the importance of video recording to observe dogs in owners' absence as a useful tool in diagnosing and treating separation related problems.

Key words: feline aggression; reconciliation; affiliative behaviours

NO KEYWORDS 355 WORDS

RISK ASSESSMENT IN THE PUBLIC CONTEXT: A CASE REPORT

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This presentation is based on a case report relating to dog aggression. In a period of one month a dog escaped from his garden three times and attacked dogs that were walking on the other side of the street with their owners. Three dogs and one person were injured. Police involvement was sought but unsuccessful so a risk assessment was carried out by the veterinary team dealing with the case. There were some important obstacles to overcome: the owner refused to collaborate and threatened legal action against us; we could not examine the dog and; our assessment was based solely on observation and indirect information given by neighbours and anonymous witnesses. We collected as thorough a history as was possible including: household members, the dog's living environment and arousing, eliciting, reinforcing and appeasing stimuli. We had some indirect information about the household members; their professional and social life, their dog handling capabilities and responses when the dog was involved in a conflict. Based on these data we compiled a report attempting to identify the elements that seemed crucial in the prevention and control of accidents and we estimated the degree of safety they provided. We not only focused on the dogs in the street, but also on all possible victims (direct and indirect, on the street and in the garden) including the owners. We proposed very specific recommendations for controlling and improving the situation. The final report was presented to the mayor of the city/ district. All sources of information remained anonymous in the official report but their identity was revealed in an accompanying confidential letter. The owners of the dogs that were attacked and I were invited by the mayor to discuss the situation. This meeting resulted in the police contacting the owner to give them the opportunity to respond to the report, followed by a written contract between the police and the owner which included a time schedule to implement our recommendations. The precautions were not implemented in full and the dog was euthanized seven months later after biting the owner in one of the contexts we had identified as being a risk.

Key words: feline aggression; reconciliation; affiliative behaviours