The Pet Effect: The Impact Of The Human-Animal Bond On Society

Steven Feldman
Human Animal Bond Research Institute
The human-animal bond is universally embraced as an essential element of human wellness.
Research
• World’s largest human-animal interaction database
• Funding new, innovative research

Education
• Public outreach
• Veterinary Certification

Advocacy
• Legislative and policy initiatives
HABRI Grants

• The Effect of Animal-Assisted Intervention on Preoperative Anxiety and Dose of Sedation in Children
  Zenithson Y. Ng, DVM, M.S. (University of Tennessee, Knoxville)

• Impact of Animal Assisted Therapy on Quality, Completeness, and Patient and Parental Satisfaction in Children Undergoing Clinical Echocardiography
  Piers C. A. Barker, M.D (Duke University)

• Pets in the Classroom (PIC): What are the Social, Behavioral, and Academic Effects of Classroom Pets for Children, 8-10 years?
  Amy McCullough, PhD (American Humane Association)

• Measuring the Impact of a Mutually Reinforcing Relationship Between Pet Owners and Their Pets
  Charles Faulkner, PhD (Lincoln Memorial University)
HABRI Grants

- Healthy Aging: human companionship through fostering felines
  *Heidi Ewen, PhD (University of Georgia Research Foundation)*

- The health and developmental benefits of companion animals for young children: advancing the evidence base
  *Hayley Christian, PhD (The University of Western Australia)*

- Shelter cat adoption in families of children with autism: impact on children’s social skills and anxiety as well as cat stress
  *Gretchen Carlisle, PhD (University of Missouri)*

- Integration of AAI and applied behavior analysis to improve academic performance in children with intellectual and/or developmental disability
  *Alexandra Protopopova, PhD (Texas Tech University)*
Research

Child Health and Development
- Autism
- Allergies/Immunity/Asthma
- Learning

Mental Health and Wellness
- PTSD
- Depression
- Social Capital

Healthy Aging
- Cardiovascular Health/Obesity
- Loneliness
- Dementia/Alzheimer’s Disease
The Power of the Pet Effect

- 65% of U.S. households have pets
- 69% of pet owners say their pets are important to their physical health
- 75% of pet owners say their pets are important to their mental health

“My therapy is quite simple: I wag my tail and lick your face until you feel good about yourself again.”
Most Doctors have successfully worked with animals in medicine

- 69% of have worked with animals in a hospital, medical center, or medical practice to assist patient therapy or treatment
- Interactions with animals improve patients’ physical condition (88%), mental health condition (97%)
- 74% said they would prescribe a pet to improve overall health
Pet Ownership SAVES $11.7 BILLION in health care costs.

Pet Owners are Healthier

- Fewer Visits to the Doctors Office
- Reduced Obesity

132.8 MILLION pet owners visit a doctor 0.6 times less than the average non-pet owner, resulting in cost savings of $11.37 BILLION.

20+ MILLION dog owners who walk their dog five or more times a week show a lower incidence of obesity, resulting in savings of $418 MILLION.

“Scientific research has shown a number of key health benefits associated with pet ownership including studies demonstrating a positive impact on infection control, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, cholesterol, allergies, stress, blood pressure and mental health.”

— Terry L. Clower, PhD, George Mason University

Study commissioned by The Human Animal Bond Research Initiative Foundation

The full report can be found on the HABRI website www.habri.org
Knowing about scientific research on the health benefits of pets...

- **92%** of pet owners are more likely to maintain a pet’s health, including keeping up with **vaccines and preventive medicine**

- **89%** of pet owners are more likely to maintain a pet’s health, including **regular check-ups with a veterinarian**

- **51%** of pet owners are **more likely to purchase pet health insurance**

- *HABRI Survey of 2,000 Pet Owners, May 2016 (MoE = + 2.2%)*
Knowing about scientific research on the health benefits of pets...

- **89%** of pet owners are *more likely to take better care of a pet*

- **75%** of pet owners are *more likely to microchip* a pet to ensure it can be found if lost or stolen

- **74%** of pet owners are *less likely to give up a pet for any reason*

*HABRI Survey of 2,000 Pet Owners, May 2016 (MoE = + 2.2%)*
Oxytocin Break
Change the World
Human-Animal Bond Veterinary Certification

Course modules will include:
• The Science of the Human-Animal Bond
• Communicating the Human-Animal Bond
• The Human-Animal Bond in Medical Practice
• Animal and Practice Welfare
• Community Engagement
ThePetEffect.org

The Health Benefits are Real
Pets are more than just cute and cuddly – new research shows they're actually making us healthier.

Check Out the Science

Help Spread the Word

Pets & Blood Pressure
Owning a pet can help lower missing blood pressure

Pets & Depression
THE PET EFFECT

Feelings of Worthlessness
Confidence
Research Shows:

Animal-assisted interventions (AAI) positively impact hospital patients

Support cognitive development and learning

Alleviate stress and teach empathy, especially in children and teens

Support healthy aging

Action:

Support high-quality animal therapy programs in medical treatment and rehabilitation facilities

Promote the presence of classroom pets, Support companion animals in library reading programs

AAI in treatment programs for at-risk youth

Help older people keep their pets, Support AAI in resident facilities
Service Dogs Help Veterans with PTSD

• The Americans with Disabilities Act recognizes service dogs for PTSD
• Not only do they reduced anxiety and depression, they reduce the need for medication
• The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs does not provide service dogs for veterans with PTSD or TBI
• Research is key to support for expansion of these programs
Federal Legislation

H.R. 2327, Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers Act, which directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to provide service dogs to veterans with severe Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

H.R. 909, Pet and Women Safety Act, which would expand federal law to include protections for pets of domestic violence victims and establish a federal grant program that will help ensure that victims have access to safe shelters for their pets.
Future Initiatives

• **Boost pet access and adoption**
  - Pet-friendly Housing
  - Pets at Work

• **Make pet ownership more affordable**
  - Flexible Spending Accounts
  - State Tax Legislation
Pet Night on Capitol Hill

- PetNightonCapitolHill.org
- Supported by Pet Partners
Your Story to Tell

Engage

Educate

Advocate

Pets Are Your Prescription For Health

NAME ___________________________ DATE ____________

ADDRESS ________________________

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