

CULTURE CHANGE FOR THE AGING AND COMPANION ANIMALS IN NURSING HOMES: BENEFITS, RISKS, BARRIERS AND BEST PRACTICES





Coming Together. Creating Community.
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Background





“...a small pet is often an excellent companion for the sick, for long chronic cases especially...”

--Florence Nightingale,
Notes on Nursing, 1860

Nursing Home Reform Act

Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987
(OBRA '87)

The Nursing Home Reform Act is directed at assuring that each resident of a nursing home receives and each facility provides the necessary care and services “to attain or maintain the highest practicable physical, mental, and psychological well being” of the resident in accordance with the resident’s comprehensive assessment and plan of care.

(42 U.S.C. §1395i-3(b)(4); 42 U.S.C. §1396r (b)(4); 42 C.F.R. §483.25)



Culture Change in Long-Term Care

The Eden Alternative: Ten Principles

2. “An Elder-centered community commits to creating a Human Habitat where life revolves around close and continuing contact with plants, animals, and children. It is these relationships that provide the young and old alike with a pathway to a life worth living.”

Source: <http://www.edenalt.org/our-10-principles>



Prevalence and Role of Animal Companions (Pets)





- 71.4 million (62%) of U.S. households own a pet.

Source: National Pet Owners Survey, 2009-2010

- 50% of individuals with a pet report that “My pet is just as much a part of the family as any other person in the household.”
- 36% report that “My pet is part of the family, but not as much as the people in the household.”

Source: The AP-Petside.com POLL, conducted by GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media (2009)





HEADLINE:

Katrina survivors upset over pets left behind

Rescuers say they can't let animals accompany their owners

Associated Press, September 5, 2005

“As Valerie Bennett was evacuated from a New Orleans hospital, rescuers told her there was no room in the boat for her dogs.

She pleaded. “I offered him my wedding ring and my mom’s wedding ring,” the 34-year-old nurse recalled Saturday.

They wouldn’t budge. She and her husband could bring only one item, and they already had a plastic tub containing the medicines her husband, a liver transplant recipient, needed to survive.

Such emotional scenes were repeated perhaps thousands of times along the Gulf Coast last week as pet owners were forced to abandon their animals in the midst of evacuation...



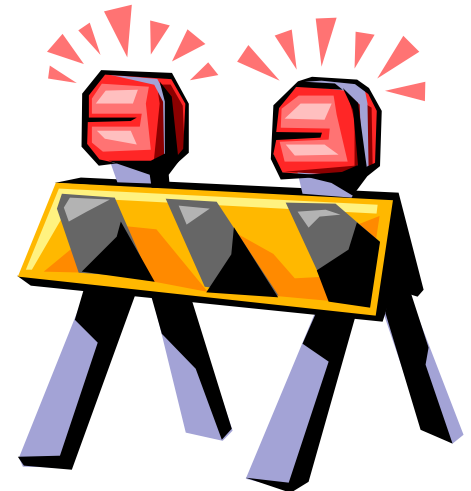


Benefits of Human-Animal Interaction: Review of Research Literature



CAVEAT

- Anecdotal Evidence vs. Empirical Research Evidence
- Limitations of Existing Research





Companion Animals and Health & Wellness

A review of studies of the health benefits of a companion animal found:

“Pets can lower blood pressures, heart rates, and anxiety; enhance social environments; decrease depression; and increase exercise, cardiovascular fitness, and survival postmyocardial infarction. (references omitted)

Wilson, C.C., Human-Animal Interactions and Health: Best Evidence and Where We Go from Here in Handbook on Animal Assisted Therapy, Theoretical Foundations and Guidelines for Practice (Fine, A.H., ed.), Academic Press, 2nd Ed., 2006





Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) and the Elderly

“Only a few studies have been conducted on the elderly [and pet therapy], and even a smaller number have been replicated. Generally the emerging opinion is rather supportive of the use of animals for companionship and the promotion of physical, social, and emotional health of the elderly.” (references omitted)

Colombo, G., Buono, M.D., Smania, K. et al., (2006), Pet Therapy and institutionalized elderly: a study of 144 cognitively unimpaired subjects, *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics*, 42, 207-216.





Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) and Individuals with Dementia

A review of the literature regarding studies of animal-assisted therapy (AAT) or pets as an intervention for dementia conducted 1995-2004 suggests:

“AAT may ameliorate... [behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia], 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.”

Filan, S.L. & Llewellyn-Jones, R.H., (2006), Animal-Assisted Therapy for Dementia: A Review of the Literature, *International Psychogeriatrics*, 18(4), 597-611.





Companion Animals in Long-Term Care Facilities

“Studies of residential pet programs have reported positive outcomes in elderly residents and staff members.

Pet visitation programs have been reported to be beneficial—commonly among the long-term care population. The most commonly studied dependent variable when pet visitation programs have been tested is increased social interaction among elderly nursing home residents (references omitted) . This variable is of considerable importance to this population as social isolation is a major problem in the nursing home setting.”

Johnson, R.A., Odendaal, J.S.J., & Meadows, R.L., (2002), Animal-Assisted Interventions Research: Issues and Answers, *Western Journal of Nursing Research*, 24, 422-440.





Companion Animals in Long-Term Care Facilities

“Studies addressing the benefits of AAA [animal-assisted activities] for nursing-home residents have primarily assessed outcomes of mood, daily functioning, and social interactions using various measures and designs.

Seniors in nursing homes and those with Alzheimer’s disease or dementia appear to benefit from both pet ownership and AAA in the areas of mood, loneliness, social behaviors, and caloric intake.”

Barker, S.B. & Wolen, A.R., (2008), The Benefit of Human-Companion Animal Interaction: A Review, *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education* 35(4), 487-495.





Future Directions of Research

“Human-animal contact can influence psychological and physiological parameters important to health and welfare; nevertheless, there has been relatively little research on the variables that influence or mediate those health consequences. In addition, little attention has been paid on how to create or alter the animal interactions for the betterment of people and their animals. *** Along with... theoretically driven research, there is a need for replication of salient research findings to resolve important discrepancies in the literature. Last, animal-assisted therapy (AAT) has to be placed in the context of alternative therapies now available to define its specificity, risks, and overall benefits.”

Beck, A.M. & Katcher, A.H., (2003), Future Directions in Human-Animal Bond Research, *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47(1), 79-93.



The Regulatory Framework for Animals in Nursing Homes





Regulatory Framework: Overview

- Federal regulations do not specifically address animals in nursing homes.
- Thirty-two (32) states do not have specific statutes and regulations with respect to animals in their nursing home.
- Eighteen (18) states have statutes and regulations dealing specifically with animals in nursing homes.





Regulatory Framework:

Summary of State Statutes & Regulations

- One state (Washington) provides that residents must have reasonable opportunity to have regular contact with animals as desired.
- Four states (Alabama, New York, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina) and District of Columbia, explicitly authorize pet therapy programs.





Regulatory Framework:

Summary of State Statutes & Regulations, cont'd

- Three states (Arizona, Colorado, and New Jersey) require that animals visiting or residing in nursing homes be licensed.
- Two states (Pennsylvania and Washington) limit the number of animals in the facility.
- Seven states (Idaho, Montana, New Jersey, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wyoming) limit the types of animals allowed in facilities.





Regulatory Framework:

Summary of State Statutes & Regulations, cont'd

- Twelve states (Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Washington, and Wyoming) require vaccination of animals visiting or residing in the facility.
- Nine states (Alabama, Idaho, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Washington, and Wyoming) provide that animals visiting or residing in nursing homes must have veterinarian examinations and/or be free of disease.
- Thirteen states (Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wyoming) prohibit animals in certain areas of the nursing home, such as kitchens and dining rooms, because of sanitation concerns.





Regulatory Framework:

Summary of State Statutes & Regulations, cont'd

- Five states (Idaho, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and South Dakota) and the District of Columbia, provide that there must be policies and procedures regarding animals in the nursing home facility.
- Five states (New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wyoming) require that a staff person be designated as caretaker for an animal.



Regulatory Framework:

Summary of State Statutes & Regulations, cont'd

- Five states (Idaho, New York, Ohio, Oregon, and Washington) provide that animals must not infringe on rights of or negatively affect the well-being of other residents.





Arkansas Regulation

586 PET THERAPY

586.1 Animals will be allowed to be brought into the nursing home for a short period of time on a limited basis for therapy sessions.

586.2 These therapy sessions must be supervised at all times to see that the patients are not in danger at any time during the session.

586.3 Animals brought into the facility for these sessions should be animals that will present no danger to the patients.

586.4 These sessions shall be sponsored by organizations, groups, or family members that are familiar with the actions and habits of the animals being used in the therapy session.





Arkansas Regulation, cont'd

586 PET THERAPY

586.5 Animals used in therapy sessions shall be properly vaccinated, and records of the vaccinations maintained by the facility.

586.6 Pets must be maintained outside the building, and the area in which they are kept must be clean and sprayed on a regular basis to prevent rodents and insects.

f. Miscellaneous (ALSCU)

2. Birds, cats, dogs, and other animals may be permitted in the Alzheimer's Special Care Unit. All animals that enter the facility shall have appropriate vaccinations and licenses. A veterinary record shall be kept on all animals to verify vaccinations and be made readily available for review. Pets may not be allowed in food preparation, food storage or dining or serving areas.





Application of Arkansas Regulation

- The Arkansas regulation indicates that animals are to be allowed in nursing homes for limited time periods.
- However, the Arkansas Office of Long-Term Care grants waivers of this regulation and many facilities have animals in their facilities under these waivers.
- The Office of Long-Term Care is in process of drafting new “culture-change friendly” regulations.



Survey of Iowa & Arkansas Nursing Homes: Preliminary Results





Methodology

- A survey was conducted of a sample of Iowa and Arkansas nursing homes.
- In Arkansas, the survey, in the form of a written questionnaire, was distributed during regional training sessions sponsored by Arkansas Accord (state culture change workgroup). Surveys were collected from 57 facilities.
- In Iowa, the survey, in the form of an email questionnaire, was distributed by the Iowa Health Care Association and the Iowa Association of Homes and Services for the Aging to 388 of their member facilities. 188 facilities responded.





Survey Question Categories

1. Pet Visitation Programs
2. Facility (Live-in) Animals (i.e. animals that live on-site and interact on a regular/on-going basis with residents)
3. Residents' Personal Pets (i.e. a resident's personal pet that is allowed to live in the facility with the resident)





Iowa

Pet Visitation Programs

(preliminary results)

Facilities with pet visitation programs 78%

Facilities without pet visitation programs 22%



Iowa Respondents with Pet Visitation Programs

(preliminary results)

What types of animals participate in program:

dogs	98%
cats	64%
other	32%

Who conducts program:

Local animal shelter/humane society	23%
Volunteers with their personal pets	59%
other	32%

How often:

daily	2%
weekly	29%
monthly	34%
other	27%

Note: Percentages may exceed 100% due to overlap in responses



Iowa Respondents with Live-In Pets:

(preliminary results)

Total respondents with live-in pets		54%
	dogs	31%
	cats	45%
	birds	65%
	fish	41%
	other	4%

Note: Percentages may exceed 100% due to overlap in responses





Iowa Respondent Facilities Allowing Personal Pets of Residents

(preliminary results)

Yes	13%
No	52%
Under some circumstances	24%
Other *	10%
No response	1%

* usually indicates that pets may not live at the facility but visits are welcome



Arkansas

Pet Visitation Programs

(preliminary results)

Facilities with pet visitation programs	63%
Facilities without pet visitation programs	37%



Arkansas Respondents with Pet Visitation Programs

(preliminary results)

What types of animals participate in program:

dogs	100%
cats	28%
other	22%

Who conducts program:

Local animal shelter/humane society	8%
Volunteers with their personal pets	94%
other	8%

How often:

daily	8%
weekly	42%
monthly	33%
other	25%

Note: Percentages may exceed 100% due to overlap in responses





Arkansas Respondents with Live-In Pets

(preliminary results)

Total respondents with facility pets	44%
dogs	24%
cats	40%
birds	96%
fish	64%
other	4%

Note: Percentages may exceed 100% due to overlap in responses





Arkansas Respondent Facilities Allowing Personal Pets of Residents

(preliminary results)

Yes	15%
No	37%
Under some circumstances	28%
Other *	20%
No response	19%

* usually indicates that pets may not live at the facility but visits are welcome



Issues, Problems, & Concerns



What are they?



- It depends....
- Just like in private homes, it varies
- The Arkansas and Iowa surveys revealed some of the expressed issues, problems and concerns
- And most can be overcome 😊



Transmission of Infectious Diseases?



- What do you do?
- Health screening and veterinarian certification
- Infection control procedures
- Resident and animal separation
- Animals kept from food preparation areas



Allergies?

- What do you do?
- Environmental control?
- Resident separation?
- Pet separation?
- Pet selection?
- Air filters?
- The solution is driven by the problem...



Aggression?



- Territorial?
- Scared?
- Abused?
- Playful biter?
- Aggressive breed?
- Temperament testing is the best solution
- Both animals and residents need to be the right fit...



Fall Risk?

- Risk must be considered
- Animals can be walking obstacles
- Smaller animals might be harder to see
- Free range “white” animals against a “white” floor, probably not the best
- Solution: Assess and mitigate all risks



Resident Can't Care for Their Pet?



- Philosophical underpinning of the nursing discipline is “holistic care”
- Nursing Home Reform Act 1987
- We must provide care that honors the mind, body & spirit
- Consider if pet care would also serve the mind & spirit care of our elder...





Considerations

- Pre-planning, the most important step
 - Ensure all regulations and licenses are in order
- Just like personal homes and family situations, there is not one pet that works in all settings (active or passive pets?)
- The overall culture must be considered
 - Who wants a pet?
 - What type of pet?
 - Who will care for the pet?
 - Where do you get a pet?
- Goals and barriers need to be considered before answering the above questions
- Risk versus benefit



Partnerships



There are Many Partners...

- Regulatory entities
- Veterinarians
- Animal Services (shelters)
- Humane Societies
- Local rescue groups
- Culture Change Resources
- Other providers, ask your peers about their success stories 😊







THANK YOU

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