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INTRODUCTION

- Annually, tens of thousands of unwanted dogs arrive at animal shelters nationwide where they live in caged runs with limited positive human interaction
- It is proposed that regular obedience training by a U.S. military veteran may facilitate shelter dogs' adoptability, while providing constructive activity and enabling veterans' stress and trauma relief.

AIMS

- 1: To identify the adoption rates among the canine participants of the study.
- 2: To determine to what extent dogs receiving basic obedience training from veterans have better behavior scores than the control group not receiving training.

METHODS

- Dogs from the Central Missouri Humane Society are matched for size and randomly assigned to either the dog training or control group.
- Dogs in the training group receive one hour of training, twice per week, for at least two weeks with a veteran.
- Each weekday, all study dogs (training and control) have their behavior assessed by an assessor blinded to group assignment using a standardized behavior assessment. Lower scores indicate better behavior.



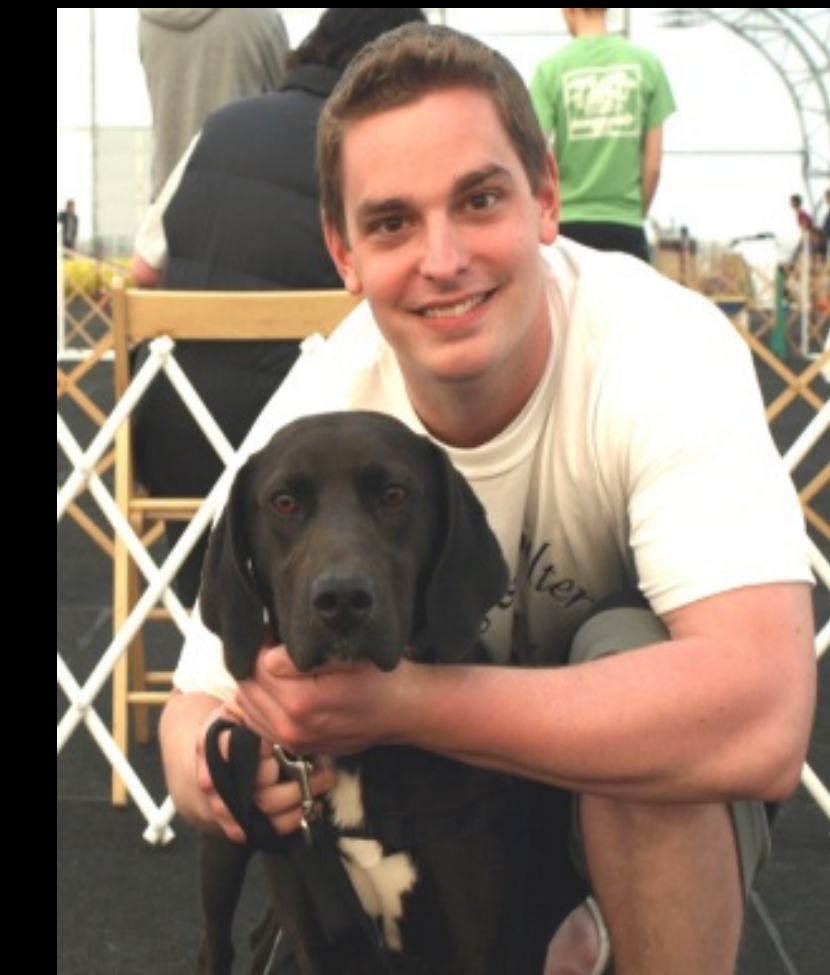
SAMPLE DESCRIPTION AND FINDINGS

1: Outcomes of Canine Participants

Dog Demographics		Training Group <i>n</i> = 122	Control Group <i>n</i> = 119
Gender	Male	59 (48%)	55 (46%)
	Female	63 (52%)	64 (54%)
Age in Years	Mean (range)	2.23 (1-9)	2.22 (1-8)
Outcome	Adoption	99 (81%)	87 (73%)
	Foster	7 (16%)	13 (11%)
	Rescue	12 (10%)	12 (10%)
	Euthanasia	4 (3%)	7 (6%)

2: Behavior Score Findings

Dog Demographics		Training Group <i>n</i> = 44	Control Group <i>n</i> = 47
Gender	Male	21 (48%)	25 (53%)
	Female	23 (52%)	22 (47%)
Age in Years	1-2	30 (68%)	27 (57%)
	3-5	12 (27%)	18 (38%)
	>5	2 (5%)	2 (5%)
Size (measured at the shoulder)	Small (15")	16 (36%)	18 (38%)
	Medium (16-24")	26 (59%)	29 (62%)
	Large (>25")	2 (5%)	0 (0%)
Dog Obedience Skill Exam Scores		Training Group <i>n</i> = 44	Control Group <i>n</i> = 47
Total score within group comparison	Pre Range (median, mean)	4-20 (12.5, 12.41)	4-20 (13.00, 12.60)
	Post range (median, mean)	4-20 (12.0, 11.75)	4-20 (12.00, 12.60)
	Score change	-9-14 (0.00, 0.66) <i>p</i> = 0.9527	-12-14 (0.00, 0.00) <i>p</i> = 0.4454
Between group comparison on total behavior change score		<i>p</i> = 0.7186	



OUTCOMES

- 1: Preliminary findings concluded that basic obedience training of shelter dogs could increase adoptability and decrease euthanasia.
- 2: Dogs in the training group received better behavior assessment scores than dogs in the control group.



Project was made possible by:

