One Health in AAI
Current trends and future collaborations in research and practice

IAHAIO
International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations

Symposium 24-26 October 2018
Friendship Sport Center, Amsterdam

In association with

With thanks to
Welcome

We are delighted to welcome you to Amsterdam and our 2018 Symposium. This year we are working together with IAHAIO member, AAIZOO, to bring you a very special programme of events. AAIZOO is engaged with many exciting aspects of the human-animal interaction and animal-assisted interventions in The Netherlands, some of which will be showcased during the Symposium.

Much progress has been made in recent years in this field, as seen in the big growth in AAI programmes for different populations, as well as the rise of research studies at universities and institutes. We feel strongly that to enhance our understanding of the mechanisms and effects of animal-assisted interventions, researchers and practitioners would benefit from closer collaboration when setting up studies and programmes and reviewing outcomes. This approach would also bring animal welfare considerations into sharper focus, which is so important for all.

This forms the main focus of our Symposium – and we hope to create discussion, dialogue and debate on these issues. There is much on offer. We have invited an international line-up of speakers to share their insights, special session workshops to open up discussions, ‘flash’ presentations of posters in key themes of the Symposium, and a wonderful opportunity for participants to observe and visit AAI programmes taking place in and around Amsterdam.

We extend our thanks to Nestle Purina and Martin Mitchell, CEVA for their financial support, which has enabled us to bring this important Symposium to you and contribute to the dissemination of important developments to the wider HAI/AAI community.

Marie-Jose Enders-Slegers
President

IAHAIO | International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations
**Schedule**

**Wednesday 24 October 2018**
- 1.30pm to 5.00pm  Annual General Meeting for IAHAIO members
- 5.00pm to 7.00pm  Registration for conference and sign-up for AAI programmes
- 7.00pm  Reception

**Thursday 25 October 2018**
- 8.00am-8:30am  Registration and sign-up for programme visits/Coffee
- 8.30am  Welcome from Mr Etienne Spee, Director of Friendship Sport Center
- 8.45am-9:30am  Welcome address – IAHAIO President and AAIZOO Chair
- 9:45am-1:30pm  AAI programmes – at Center or around Amsterdam
- 1:30pm  Return to Center; Lunch and networking
- 2:30pm-3:15pm  Keynote 2: Theory and research methods in animal-assisted interventions, Dr Steffie van der Steen  *(see page 8)*
- 3.20pm-4.20pm  Special sessions – choose 1 of 4  *(see page 12)*
- 4.20pm-4.30pm  Refreshments
- 4.30pm-5.30pm  Flash poster presentations
- 7.00pm  Dinner at Center, with musical entertainment

**Friday 26 October 2018**
- 8.30am-9:15am  Keynote 3: Quality standards in animal-assisted interventions, Dr Karin Hediger  *(see page 10)*
- 9:30am-1:15pm  AAI programmes: at Center or around Amsterdam
- 1:15pm-2:00pm  Return to Center; Lunch and networking
- 2:00pm-3.00pm  Flash poster presentations
- 3.00pm-3:20pm  Refreshments/vote for best poster
- 3:20pm-4:20pm  Special sessions - Choose 1 of 4  *(see page 12)*
- 4:20pm-4.50pm  Panel discussion
- 4.50pm-5.00pm  Announcement of poster winner and closing remarks
Assisting the animal in animal-assisted interventions: Keys to safeguarding animal welfare

Zenithson Ng, DVM, MS, DABVP (Canine/Feline)
Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences
University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine, Knoxville, TN, USA

Biography

Zenithson Ng is a clinical assistant professor of the Community Practice Service at the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine. He received his veterinary degree from Cornell University; then completed a small animal rotating internship at the ASPCA in NYC, followed by an American Board of Veterinary Practitioners (ABVP) canine/feline residency combined with a master's degree in human-animal bond studies at Virginia Tech. He was one of the founders of the animal-assisted intervention program at Virginia Tech and now serves as veterinary advisor of the Human-Animal Bond in Tennessee (HABIT), the animal-assisted intervention program at the University of Tennessee. His clinical interests include behavior, dentistry, preventive medicine, shelter medicine, and management of chronic disease.

His research interests span all aspects of the human-animal bond including the effect of human-animal interaction on both humans and animals, the veterinary-client relationship, and stress reduction in both veterinary and animal-assisted intervention settings.

Abstract

When the goal of an animal-assisted intervention (AAI) is to achieve positive effects for the participant, it is easy to overlook the effects on most instrumental player of the interaction: the animal. Therapy animals are not merely tools, but rather sentient beings that are impacted by the AAIIs just as much as the humans are. Therein lies an ethical obligation for AAI practitioners to assure good welfare of the animals used for these interventions. While it is optimistic to assume that animals benefit from AAIIs, it is realistic and responsible to be aware that animals can be negatively impacted by them as well. Certain aspects of AAIIs...
may be stress-inducing to the animal, which can result in short and long-term consequences to the animal’s mental and physical health. The controllable factors of AAIs that can be stress-inducing to the animal if not carefully considered are the environment, the practitioner, the participant, and the intervention itself. To uphold the tenet that you are your animal’s best advocate (YAYABA), the practitioner should be mindful of and modify each of these variables to ensure that good animal welfare is maintained. Since animal welfare is difficult to quantify, the practitioner must diligently observe the animal’s behaviors and adjust the intervention accordingly. Standardized protocols should be established to determine specific endpoints for an AAI and to prepare for adverse events. Only when the animal’s welfare is prioritized can successful and mutually beneficial effects in all participants be achieved.
Keynote 2

Theory and research methods in animal-assisted interventions

Dr Steffie van der Steen

Biography

Steffie van der Steen is assistant professor (Tenure Track) at the department of Special Needs Education and Youth Care of the University of Groningen, in the Netherlands.

After obtaining her Master’s degree at Harvard University, Steffie became an expert in micro-developmental research. Her PhD research focused on observations of children’s natural interactions, and analyzing these using time-serial techniques. These methodological skills provided a good base for several research projects on human-animal interactions.

In collaboration with the department of Anthrozoology of the Open University, Steffie is currently involved in three PhD projects on person-animal interactions with several publications in progress. Her talk will focus on the value of observational research, movement analyses, and nonlinear analyses techniques when studying human-animal interactions, especially when it comes to building and testing theories.

Abstract

The field of human-animal interactions has steadily grown in recent years. We witness both a growing numbers of practitioners, as well as an increasing number of research publications suggesting positive effects of animal-assisted interventions (AAI). The fusion and knowledge exchange between research and practice also continues to unfold. This IAHAIO symposium is a prime example. As with all disciplines, moving forward crucially depends on the theoretical underpins used to explain research findings and practical applications. Why do we see positive effects of AAI, what are the possible underlying mechanisms? After all, it is not sufficient anymore to know if AAI are successful, but even more so, why they are. In the case of AAI, theories about the underlying mechanisms need proper testing. Only then can
this field develop further, both with regard to research, as well as practical applications. In this plenary talk, I will describe and clarify the possible mechanisms that have been hypothesized to underlie AAI, and specifically highlight the attunement or synchrony between humans and animals (Verheggen et al., 2017). I will then show which new methods my colleagues and I have used to investigate these underlying mechanisms. My talk ends with the future directions of research within this field, and how both practitioners and researchers can benefit from this work.
Quality standards in animal-assisted interventions

Dr Karin Hediger
eidg. dipl. Psychotherapeutin
Fachpsychologin für Psychotherapie FSP
Fachpsychologin für Kinder- und Jugendpsychologie FSP

Biography

Dr Karin Hediger is a psychotherapist and researcher at the University of Basel, Switzerland, at the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute and a neurorehabilitation clinic, investigating effects of animal-assisted interventions. After studying psychology at University of Zürich, Switzerland, she did her PhD in Rostock, Germany, in the field of human-animal interaction. She has a certificate in animal-assisted therapy, a diploma in equine-assisted therapy and recently founded a centre for animal-assisted psychotherapy.

Karin Hediger is president of the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Human-Animal Relationship (IEMT Switzerland), secretary of the International Society for Animal-Assisted Therapy (ISAAT) and gives courses on animal-assisted interventions in many different institutes.

Abstract

Since the field of animal-assisted interventions is growing, quality assurance is a highly important topic. To provide professional interventions, a substantial background and education of the providers is needed. Today, there are no legal regulations for educational programs and certification of the providers with the exception of two regions in Europe. The aim of this presentation is to give an overview of the current state of definition of quality in animal-assisted intervention by IAHAIO and to outline the advantages of certification. The importance of quality standards will be visualized by case reports.

In the presentation, a model of minimal quality standards will be presented that is used by the International and European Society for Animal-Assisted Therapy (ISAAT and ESAAT) to harmonize standards and to make it more easy for clients to understand which offer is of what quality. Moreover, an outlook into possible future scenarios will be made and requests from the people working in the field can be discussed.
Special sessions

Special session 1

Choosing just the right dog for AAI. Individual predispositions, breed related traits and the large-scale consequences

Michał Piotr Pregowski, Ph.D., Warsaw University of Technology & IAHAI

This workshop is designed to fuel a discussion on the social outcome of decisions made by organizations offering animal-assisted interventions in their day-to-day work with canines. Selection of dogs and the rationale behind such selection vary not only from country to country, but often from program to program. During our workshop we will discuss the strengths, weaknesses and social consequences of numerous approaches to selecting dogs for AAI. Such approaches include (a) breed specificity (choosing to work with members of just one breed or members of few selected breeds), (b) breed selectivity (choosing not to work with particular breeds), (c) focusing solely on individual predispositions of each dog.

The workshop will also cover topics such as social construction of dogs and the dog breed popularity as a reflection of fashion rather than function.

Special session 2

Autism assistance and therapy dogs: current research and future directions

Carolien Wijker and Inge Noback, Open University

The workshop starts with two 10 minute presentations on current research projects on autism assistance and therapy dogs.

The first project is focused on children with autism between the ages of 3 and 7. The study explores the effects of an Animal-Assisted Intervention (AAI) on the quality of life of the child as well as the quality of life of the family. Between 2012 and 2015, 61 families applied for an autism assistance dog. Longitudinal data was gathered before the arrival of the assistance dog, after 6 months and after 12 months. The presentation will focus on the main findings and main challenges of the project.

The second project is the first randomized controlled study that explores the effects of Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) with dogs in adults with ASD and normal to high intelligence. Between January 19, 2015 and July 13, 2017 a randomized controlled trial with baseline, post-intervention, and ten-week follow-up was conducted. In total, 53 adults from a mental health care organization in the Netherlands with ASD, were randomized in an intervention (N=27) versus waiting list control group (N=26). The presentation will focus on the main study outcomes; perceived stress, psychological symptoms, social responsiveness, and self-esteem and main challenges of this project.
After the presentations we would like to open up discussion to address future directions. Both researchers and practitioners are welcome to join. The main topics for the discussion will be animal welfare and research design, but participants are also invited to raise new issues. After a discussion of about 20-30 minutes we will summarize the main points and provide a short overview of the main points from the discussion.

Special session 3

Critically assessing animal welfare and wellbeing in animal-assisted interventions

Zenithson Ng, DVM, MS, DABVP (Canine and Feline) Clinical Assistant Professor, and Dr Tynke de Winkel, Open University

For animal-assisted interventions to be successful and mutually beneficial for both human and animal, animal welfare must be prioritized for every session. This workshop will critically assess animal welfare and wellbeing in various AAI scenarios, based on several videos and an interactive session.

By the end of the session, the participant will be able to:

1) Recognize key behavioral signs in an animal that indicate its welfare state
2) Describe how the animal welfare's state affects the animal, human participants, and the environment
3) Modify the critical factors that impact the animal's welfare state: the handler, participant, environment, and intervention

Special session 4

Ecological pedagogy

Ineke Karlas-Edes, AAIZOO and Hogeschool Utrecht

Ecological pedagogy is a personal and contextual based way of connecting to others. Every relationship is based upon trust and personal connection but also influenced by the history of each individual and the surroundings the interaction takes place in. Animals make our relationship with the client more accessible however, as professionals we should be aware of our influence and responsibility in the relationship.

In this workshop you will hear about the ecological theories that appear in Animal-Assisted Interventions. We will practise how to take our own ecological pedagogical perspective into account when making contact with people as well as animals. This workshop aims to increase self-awareness in starting positive relationships.
Demonstrations

Attendees at the symposium have the opportunity to attend AAI demonstrations/visits during the symposium.

Demonstration 1
Visit to zoo program  
(off-site, bus transport provided)

The program ‘With animals more fun in life’ takes place in the Onky Donky House next to petting zoo De Grebbehoeve of Ouwehands Dierenpark Rhenen and is an animal-assisted activity. The interaction between child and animal is central. The program has been developed for children with Down syndrome and children with autism (ASD) aged between 6 and 14 years. These children often have problems with participating in activities that society requires from them. Working with children in a petting zoo in this way is an innovative approach. The animals on the farm are trained animals and can partner safely in all kinds of activities. Many children like the interaction with animals. Under the guidance of a therapist/pedagogue and an experienced animal caretaker from Ouwehands Dierenpark Rhenen, they learn how to perform various activities with the animals thus improving and acquiring (new) life skills.

Demonstration 2
Virtual reality dolphin swim program*  
(on-site)

For some time there has been a keen interest in the therapeutic qualities of being close to dolphins. Dolphins are highly intelligent, very sensitive and live in complex societies. For that reason there is much opposition to them being kept in captivity and engaged in animal-assisted programmes, and alternatives continue to be developed. Virtual Reality is one such alternative, and this demonstration will introduce you to the work of the Dolphin Swim Club. Wild Dolphin Waterproof VR Club founder Marijke Sjollema and her husband Benno Brada (producer) invite you to put on their newly developed waterproof VR goggles and lower yourself in the water. Then you are close to becoming a ‘member’ of the Dolphin Swim Club, an organization that helps patients with multiple disabilities, without compromising the welfare of dolphins.

* You are invited to participate in this workshop by standing in the water, so do bring your swimming costume. If you prefer, you can also observe at the side of the pool, without going in to the water.

Demonstration 3
Working therapeutically with horses and adult populations  
(off-site, bus transport provided)

At SPEL Psychologen Putten qualified health and clinical psychologist/therapists, working in the field of mental health, have developed an innovative methodology: EFPP: Equine Assisted Focal Psychodynamic Psychotherapy, designed after the challenging treatment of seriously mutilated youngsters after a terrible fire in a cafe. This method, already used for many years, involves nature and animals in the treatment. This
visit will explain why and how the therapists work-assisted by horses, dogs and handlers-with clients with attachment problems and traumas from early childhood (e.g. physical and emotional abuse). With the help of volunteers, this visit will demonstrate how the therapist works, focused on sensory stimulation, attunement and corrective emotional experiences etc.

**Demonstration 4**

**Happy dogs = sustainable dogs (on-site)**

This demonstration is presented by a team of 8 trainers from the Nordic Schools for Therapy Dogs – and their dogs – led by CEO Sara Karlberg. They believe that working dogs need to be trained and treated with the respect they deserve and by doing so, they will work for us for a long time. They have worked out a concept whereby dogs are trained to choose their own position around a participant in an intervention.

1) How do we train our dogs to be happy at work? How do we train our dogs to choose their own pace and own positions and still be hard working dogs?

They believe that by teaching and reinforcing our therapy dogs to make their own choices, they will be more sustainable to us as pet-handlers. They will show participants how to take care of our dogs own way of working.

2) Fun exercises that you can apply to different populations

They will show you a great variety of exercise that can be applied to different populations.

**Demonstration 5**

**Children with horsepower (off-site, bus transport provided)**

Practical examples that show how horses can strengthen executive functions in children (6-18) who have dropped out of school. There are three ways to strengthen executive functions: by changing environment, by learning/teaching skills and by the use of rewards. Horses can play an important role in strengthening, as well as an account of the biological and physical effects (release of oxytocin and dopamine, lowering cortisol, increased blood flow in the brain) as well as on the social-cognitive effects (self-efficacy, performance accomplishment, personal agency, role theory and the theory of the transitional object) of the horse.

Both effects result in improving the working memory, cognition and behaviour, illustrated in this workshop by case studies.
Posters

The following poster abstracts were accepted for presentation at the symposium. Each presenter will give a 5 minute ‘flash’ presentation on their poster in two dedicated sessions on each day (see the Schedule on page 5). Posters will also be made available after the symposium on the IAHAIO website.

Category: Standards and protocols for setting up AAI programmes

Poster 1: Digital Pet: an IT-tool developed by Italian authorities for the governance of animal-assisted interventions

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Daniele Benedetti, Italian Ministry of Health, Roma, Italy
Martina Simonato, Italian National Reference Centre for Animal-Assisted Interventions, Legnaro (PD), Italy
Lorenzo Redigolo, Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie, Legnaro (PD), Italy
Andrea Ponzoni, Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie, Legnaro (PD), Italy
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Luca Farina, Italian National Reference Centre for Animal-Assisted Interventions, Legnaro (PD), Italy

The Italian authorities have subscribed and implemented National Guidelines for Animal-Assisted Interventions (AAI) since 2015. In order to ensure uniformity within the national territory, the NRC AAI and the Italian Ministry of Health have developed, in collaboration with the Italian Regions, the “Digital Pet” project. This is an IT-tool with the aim to manage, on a whole country level, the official lists of: a) AAI professionals, b) animal-assisted therapy (AAT) and animal-assisted education (AAE) specialized centres and recognized structures, c) AAT and AAE projects and d) animals involved in AAI.

Digital Pet is a web-based platform developed with standard tools like PHP, jQuery, Apache and MySQL. It has multiple functions: it is a useful control tool for the central and local authorities, as well as a database source of reports and information on the development of AAI in Italy. Moreover, the open access to the lists of professionals through the website https://digitalpet.it/index.php/login, is a transparent tool to promote AAI providers.

The implementation of Digital Pet is ongoing and updated on a daily basis: a test phase is currently active for submission of projects using a specific form, whereas animal lists are not operational yet. At present, 970 providers are already registered, but thousands of practitioners will be included on the lists once the past training and experience recognition process is carried out by central authorities. The list of structures will also keep on growing as more structures obtain the authorization issued by the local health authorities.
Animal-based measures are considered to be “the most appropriate indicators of animal welfare. In fact, a carefully selected combination of animal-based measures can be used to assess the welfare of a target population in a valid and robust way” (EFSA, 2012)[1]. Ethological research on selection criteria of individual animals involved in Animal-Assisted Interventions (AAI) is poor. The use of subjects not assessed by aptitude test could affects the therapeutic success as well animal welfare. The aim of the present aptitude assessment test is double: first it aims to verify the behavioral suitability of donkeys, second it evaluate the animal environment, housing and management. The appropriate behavior verification procedure begins with the observation of the environment of the donkey’s dwelling and intraspecific social interactions, in particular physical contact, grooming activities, possibility to carry dustbathing behaviour. The protocol provide of conduct a behavioral score test on human-animal relationship by an avoidance distance test and walk down the side test. During AAI activities interactions between animal and patient, postural behaviors and interspecific interaction were evaluated and scored on a 5-point arbitrary scale (0 = very low to 4= very high). Postural attitudes, olfactory, tactile, investigative and agonistic social interactions are scored according to a scale of judgment. The results of test permit to select subjects suitable to be involved in AAI.

Poster 3: Regulation of the law in AAI, aspects of strength and weaknesses: the Italian situation that "forgets" to regulate the preparation and the certification criteria of the dogs involved

Authors and affiliations
Luisa Di Biagio, Associazione Culturale “Centro Cinefolo LA MADONNINA”, Pescara, Italy
Rebecca Di Biagio (Presenting), Associazione Culturale Centro Cinefolo LA MADONNINA”, Pescara, Italy

The study aims to provide an overview of the current situation in Italy about the AAI after the approval of the laws for the regulation and recognition of professional figures.

A path that was necessary because of the complete absence of rules that sometimes led to negative consequences in practice, even to the detriment of users. An overview of the strong aspects of the trend but also a criticism of the lack of attention to the other fundamental aspect of the AAI: the preparation and certification of dogs.

There is not yet a single protocol, there is no recognition throughout the national territory of the role of Service, Assistance Dog and Emotional Support Dog, there are no rules for the protection of privacy and for the criteria for selection, preparation and certification of dogs involved.

Suggestions and hypotheses for the future, to guarantee protection and well-being.
Poster 4: Development of a Dog-Assisted Activity Program in an Primary School to improve wellbeing and social interaction among peers

Authors and affiliations
Cinzia Correale (Presenting), Ordine degli Psicologi del Lazio, Rome, Italy, Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Rome, Italy
Marta Borgi, Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Rome, Italy
Lara Crescimbene, K-9 Italy, Rome, Italy
Francesca Cinelli, Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Rome, Italy

This paper describes a pilot Dog-Assisted Activity program designed to improve wellbeing and social integration in a multi-cultural primary school in which some episodes of bullying have been reported. We developed a 5-encounters protocol with the aim of introducing pet dogs into the class to stimulate understanding of different types of communication and behavior, ultimately facilitating positive relationships among peers. A preliminary evaluation was carried out in order to assess the effect of the program on teachers’ perception of children’s difficulties (e.g., peer relationship problems) and strengths (prosocial behaviors) by means of a brief behavioral screening tool, the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ—Teacher version). Overall results indicate that, by means of the recognition of the dogs’ behavior and non-verbal communication, children were able to express their emotions and to show behaviors that had not been recognized by the teachers prior to the intervention. In particular, the SDQ Total Difficulties scores suggest that the teacher had increased awareness of the students’ difficulties as a result of the dog-assisted program. Overall, the presence of animals in the educational environment may provide enjoyment and hands-on educational experiences, enhanced psychological wellbeing, and increased empathy and socio-emotional development.
Category: Bridging the gap between researchers and researchers - ideas for the future

Poster 5: The Development of a Cognitive-Behavioral Equine Facilitated Therapy for Children and Adolescents with Anxiety

Authors and affiliations
Mary Acri, New York University, New York, USA
Meghan Morrissey (Presenting), New York University, New York, USA
Emily Hamovitch, New York University, New York, USA
Kimberly Hoagwood, New York University, New York, USA

This study aims to describe the development of a Cognitive-Behavioral (CBT) Equine Facilitated Therapy (EFT) for youth with anxiety. CBT is an active, short-term and highly effective treatment for anxiety. EFT is a form of psychotherapy involving activities with a horse conducted by a mental health professional who is either an equestrian or partners with an equine professional. EFT shows promise as a treatment for trauma, depression, and anxiety, and may be particularly suited to populations where stigma is high or where lack of engagement is creating barriers to access. There are currently no standardized CBT-based EFT interventions for youth with anxiety. To address this gap, the investigative team (composed of both mental health professionals and equestrians) built the intervention through an iterative process including identifying cognitive-behavioral strategies for anxiety and matching them with progressive horsemanship skills in engaging games to provide a practical application of the strategies. The intervention consists of ten sessions delivered in a horse arena, each following a similar structure. Homework allows for generalization outside of sessions. Future directions in testing the model include experimentally testing the intervention in a random sample of 60 youth with anxiety, who will be assigned to treatment as usual, the intervention or wait-list control. Given the critical gap between need and use of services among youth, and the intractable problems of lack of engagement in services, efforts to develop and test alternative modes of delivery for effective therapies—including the use of animals—are of paramount importance.
Category: Training for people and animals in AAI programmes

Poster 6: Training professionals in Animal-Assisted Interventions: the Italian approach to ensure quality in AAI settings

Authors and affiliations
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The framework of animal-assisted interventions (AAI) in Italy has rapidly changed in the past three years secondary to the Agreement between the Government and the Regional Authorities endorsing the National Guidelines for AAI. This legislative process aims to standardize AAI ensuring high quality and safe service for people involved, together with the respect towards health and welfare of animals concerned. An important step in this process is the standardization of education and training of AAI providers. In Italy, a multidisciplinary team should perform animal-assisted therapy and education programs using a diamond approach - that is, one professional for the human side and one for the animal side. Specific academic backgrounds are required to cover the different roles attributed to team members. Moreover, the National Guidelines for AAI define specific training courses for each professional figure. Courses consist of a modular training composed of a preparatory course, a basic course and an advanced course, whose contents and duration are mandatory. The course program should be completed in four years at the most, providing notions and skills on how to work in a multidisciplinary team and properly manage one’s professional role in an AAI setting. The Italian Regional Accreditation System for training and education ensures the quality of courses: these are organized by authorised organisations and are approved by the Regional Authorities. The attestation of competence obtained allows professionals to be registered in the national web-based platform Digital Pet that is managed by Regional and Central Authorities.
Effective treatments of highly prevalent stress-related outcomes such as depression and anxiety are understudied in adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This is the first randomized controlled study that explores the effects of Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) with dogs on perceived stress, psychological symptoms, social responsiveness, and self-esteem in adults with ASD.

A randomized controlled trial with baseline, post-intervention, and ten-week follow-up was conducted at a mental health care organization in the Netherlands. In total, 53 adults with ASD with normal to high intelligence were randomized in an intervention (N=27) versus waiting list control group (N=26).

Mixed models accounting for repeated measurements showed that AAT reduced perceived stress (Perceived Stress Scale, -3·3; 95% CI, -6·1 to -0·5) and agoraphobia (subscale of Symptom Checklist-90-Revised, SCL-90-R, -1·9; -3·4 to -0·4) in participants. Furthermore, informants reported a reduction in participants’ problems in social awareness (subscale of Social Responsiveness Scale for Adults, SRS-A, -3·4; -6·2 to -0·6) and social communication (SRS-A subscale, -5·5; -9·1 to -1·9). Models did not show effect difference for the ten-week follow-up. No significant AAT effects were shown on self-esteem (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale), self-reported SRS-A, and SCL-90-R total score.

The remarkable adherence to the therapy program by study participants and the program’s clinically relevant effects indicate that AAT with dogs can be used to reduce perceived stress and symptoms of agoraphobia, and to improve social awareness and communication in adults with ASD with normal to high intelligence.
Poster 8: Integrative Zootherapy: Interventions with a Dog in Homes for Children and Adolescents

Authors and affiliations
Regula Falquet Fehr (Presenting)
ASZ Swiss association of Zootherapy, Geneva, Switzerland
AGAPE Association of preventive and educative action, Geneva, Switzerland
SHARRE Society for Human-Animal Relationship Research & Education, Geneva, Switzerland
SIPsyM Society of Multidisciplinary Psychanalysis, Geneva, Switzerland

Integrative Zootherapy is a conjunction of therapeutic and socio-educational approaches. Former special educator and therapist, Regula Fehr and her dog-co-worker intervene with her concept since June 2017, in 6 homes for children and adolescents.

Offered within a structure, it reaches children and adolescents who refuse outside aid. It favors therapy and daily life to connect and be coherent, improving the emotional security and social behavior of the children. The children, mostly placed because of parental difficulties, display a lack of attachment and are often in a withdrawal and oppositional schema. Those who are the worst off quit school and can not even leave the home to use outside structures. That makes it very challenging for, parents, teachers, educators, etc. to help them. Oxytocin, an essential hormone for bonding and development, increases openness and trust in relationships and reduces stress, anxiety and aggressive behavior. A child, even one with an insecure or disorganized attachment pattern, can release oxytocin in a positive relationship with an animal. This provides an opening to help and therapy.

As a professional caregiver, filling in early childhood gaps, such as emotional and sensory deficits, is delicate with adolescents. Zootherapy permits exceptional sessions of “catch up” accompanying them with soothing, meaningful words while they connect with the dog.

The therapy by and with a dog encourages a positive imitation and learning pattern, enhances social skills, and works as a regulator, motivating or calming a child or even a group of children.
Health Department of the Sicilian Region has established the authorization procedures for specialized centers and non-specialized structures that provide Animal-Assisted Interventions (AAI)[1]. The central topic is represented by protection of life quality of equidae used for AAI. All the qualitative and quantitative parameters of infrastructural dimensioning have been obtained from the animal welfare risk assessment and from the animal-based indicators. It is necessary to adopt management measures to protect animal emotional balance. To meet these needs it is necessary that box and areas of social interaction and kinetic activity are conceived according to the ethological characteristics of the equidae. An important aspect to consider will be the sizing of the intraspecific social areas after the AAI sessions. It is expected the presence of a minimum surface always accessible and a group paddock for a minimum of 2 hours. The minimum size of the AAI setting, while for the rest area is to be understood as an area of emotional relax represented by the intraspecific socialization. Basically, it was decided to improve working and living environment of the equidae in order to respect their ethological needs. The effect of these structural and management modification will influence the success of therapeutic and educational activities for the patient and, at the same time, the quality of the human-animal interaction.

Category: Research methods for AAI interventions

Poster 10: The pet-effect in daily life: an experience sampling study in pet-owners

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The recognition of the important role pets play in our lives is reflected in the increasing scientific interest in the contribution of pets to our health (the “pet-effect”). Research into this effect has however resulted in mixed findings, which has been attributed to methodological constraints.

The present study examines the pet-effect in daily life. Using the Experience Sampling Method (a validated diary-method), 54 dog/cat owners, reported for five consecutive days, at ten random time-points each day, in the moment whether a pet is present and to what extent they interact with it. In addition, at each time-point they reported on their current emotions resulting in a positive (PA) and negative (NA) affect scale. In addition to being ecologically valid, this method allows for the influence of companion animals to be studied implicitly, revealing the true nature of the effect as opposed to individuals’ cognitive interpretation. Also, measuring in the moment minimizes retrospection-bias and the multiple assessments over time allows each individual to be their own control condition.

Multilevel regression analyses show that the presence of a pet is negatively associated with NA (B=-.09, P<0.05), as opposed to the interaction with a pet which is positively associated with PA (B=0.04, P<0.01). These results are indicative of a pet-effect in daily life, showing that the presence of as well as the interaction with a pet has a positive effect on our daily-life well-being. The discrepancy between the presence and interaction may point to differential mechanisms underlying these aspects of pet-ownership.
Category: AAI demonstrating best practice for one health: humans and animals

Poster 11: One Health in higher education on AAI

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The minor Animals in Care is part of the bachelor study Animal Management. The topic of this minor is Animal-Assisted Interventions, with a particular focus on animal welfare in AAI. As animal health is an integral part of animal welfare, students go through an extensive program on animal health in Animal Management, which zooms in on zoonoses for students in Animals in Care.

The educational program on zoonoses consists of a theoretical framework, which is supported by a chapter in the ‘Handboek Dieren in de Zorg’ (Handbook Animals in Care), which was co-produced with colleagues from Wageningen University (Ophorst C.S. & Ruis, M. (eds) (2014)). Here zoonoses are divided in animal groups that are part of Animal-Assisted Interventions in the Netherlands (companion animals, (exotic) farm animals, horses). Students are trained on the symptoms of zoonoses in both humans and animals and specifically in the prevention of zoonoses through quality management systems for different target groups.

Essential part in managing outbreaks of zoonoses is the training of professional skills. These are trained during an One Health Game, where students are confronted with different roles and problems. In our presentation the audience of the IAHAIO conference gets a chance to participate in part of the game to get a taste of all elements involved in good management of One Health.
Poster 12: The Hope and Recovery Pet (HARP) Program: a One Health Approach to Improving Human and Animal Well-Being

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The Hope and Recovery Pet (HARP) Program, places homeless shelter animals with adults with chronic mental illness who are at risk of social isolation; and, provides funds for food, veterinary cost and supplies for low-income participants. HARP operates through a unique collaboration between a large human non-profit healthcare system (ProMedica), a humane society (the Toledo Area Humane Society) and a university (the University of Toledo). The mission of HARP is to place shelter animals with individuals living with mental illness, to improve the well-being of both people and animals. There is robust evidence on the positive impact of animal companionship (a.k.a. - pet ownership) on human health, and research on loneliness suggests lonely individuals may seek out companion animals as a coping strategy. Loneliness is a risk factor for poor health, particularly among older adults. The World Health Organization explicitly identified social exclusion as a Social Determinant of Health (SDoH). Nationally recognized as a leader in innovations to address SDoH factors in the United States, ProMedica routinely screens for SDoH - including low social connection - in 50 primary care practices. Within this presentation, we will: situate animal companionship as a social resource and intervention within a SDoH framework; consider the HARP Program as a model for humane societies and animal shelters to partner with human healthcare systems to increase animal placements while simultaneously benefiting people; and, examine the HARP collaborative partnerships as an One Health exemplar and case study.
Poster 13: One Welfare: concerns surrounding Assistance Dogs

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Assistance dogs are trained and employed to help people with physical or mental disabilities and thus improve their wellbeing and independence. In respect of welfare effects on the dog, this role should be at least neutral and ideally positive, such that the dog has a good quality of life. Where this is not the case, not only may the dog be compromised but also individuals and organisations involved in its training, working role or other professionals or members of the public. Thus, the welfare of one species in the partnership directly relates to that of the other. Assistance dog use is a One Welfare concern.

This poster will explore some of these issues and postulate some possible remedies and areas for future research. The role of using dogs to assist children with Autism and their families is taken as an illustrative case. Using the Five Freedoms, evidence based links between welfare concerns for the dog and humans are discussed. Potential means for remedy are considered that address the need for One Welfare awareness at all points during the dog’s life. Areas for further research to reduce welfare concerns, including use of robotics are suggested.
Poster 14: Ecosystemic Play Therapy with therapy dogs

Authors and affiliations

The objective is to design an intervention protocol in which the Ecosystem Play Therapy can be combined with the benefits of the assisted therapy with dogs in survivors of interpersonal trauma. This is based on the known therapeutic advantages of the human-animal interaction based on the “Centre de Terapies Asistides amp Cans” (CTAC, España) methods and having as an intervention model The Ecosystemic Play Therapy.

According to the data of the “Organizacion para la Cooperación y Desarrollo Económico” (OCDE), Mexico has the highest rate in the world of sexual abuse, physical violence and homicide in children under 14 years old.

A very important aspect that needs to be take care of, is that personality is developed in childhood so it’s necessary that children with interpersonal trauma have access to other intervention alternatives, so the post-traumatic stress doesn’t negatively affect their healthy development.

This alternative therapy will be a new way to demonstrate the benefits of a therapy-dog as a facilitator, making the interaction simpler, enhancing the objectives and achieving this in a fun, quick way.

The population in which the intervention will be in the first instance applied are children currently in government institutions in the State of Hidalgo, Mexico, in the age range from 7 to 12 years (all of them victims of abuse).

Once the project is finished, an analysis of the results will be made to verify if this type of therapy works and has long term benefits, and so be able to replicate it in different institutions; it will therefore allow us to help more children who experience trauma.
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